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BY AND BY.

An Historical Romance of the Future.

BY

EDWARD MAITLAND,

AUTHOR OF

“THE PILGRIM AND THE SHRINE,” “HIGHER LAW,” ETC.

“In those days shall——”

Ancient Prophecy.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON.

1873.

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“ Having endeavoured in these two books to exhibit the evolution of Religion and Morals out of the contact of the world with the

human consciousness, the author cherishes the hope of being able some day to complete the series by a third."

It is in pursuance of the design thus indicated in the preface to the Second Edition of *Higher Law*, that the present work is offered. What the general intention of the series now completed may be, as well, of course, as how far that intention finds its fulfilment in *By and By*, the reader is left to determine for himself. All that the author feels disposed to add is, that whatever the shortcomings which may be discerned by others, they can scarcely make a more formidable list than those of which he himself is conscious. This, so far as *execution* is concerned. For who but the artist knows the artist's ideal?

LONDON, *April*, 1873.

PART THE FIRST.

BOOK I.

BY AND BY.

CHAPTER I.

“DESCENDING slowly, surely, helplessly, towards earth; the stars growing dimmer, until their light is utterly extinguished by the mists which, clammy, dense, and oh! so cold, are wrapping us round as in a death-shroud. The silence absolute; and nothing to indicate the nature of the place that is to receive us on quitting our aerial course. Is it land? Is it sea? Mountain or plain? A wilderness of snow, or a field of ice?

“Imagine a group of conscious souls in the interval between two existences, on the

point of being ushered into a state of Being absolutely new and untried, and devoid of the confidence which comes only of experience,—and you may imagine the depth of those sentiments of awe and mystery which possessed myself and my comrades on that night, some five and forty years ago—night so dread in itself, yet but for which, and its relation to us, this our latter age would never have been illumined by the bright, true, pure spirit of him concerning whom I have undertaken to tell.”

The speaker was old Bertie Greathead. The place was the common hall of *The Triangle*. The audience consisted of the members, young and old, of that famous Club, besides some other persons. The occasion was the first anniversary of the death of one of the members, towards whose memoirs, written by myself, Lawrence Wilmer, Bertie’s narrative was a contribution.

Having uttered the above sentences with tearful eyes and faltering voice, Bertie paused and gazed upon his hearers. The evident sympathy he found in their looks reassured

him, and, with stronger accents, he began his formal relation.

“Members of *The Triangle*, and other friends here assembled,—The narrative which I have undertaken to contribute towards a connected history of the loved friend we have lost, claims to be but a simple statement of facts. As most of you know, the literary function is not mine. Although for many years a leader and teacher of youth, my business has been aerographical and locomotive, not mental or scholastic. In short, I am simply a professor of aerial navigation. It was on one occasion, when returning from an excursion taken partly for the sake of visiting foreign regions, partly for the purpose of inculcating my art, that the series of uncommon incidents occurred without which there would have been no occasion for me to appear now before you.

“The time is forty-five years ago last Christmas. Of the youths entrusted to my charge for an aerial trip, to two only shall I have occasion to refer, namely, Mr. Wilmer, the father—long since dead—of our dear

Lawrence here, and our distinguished friend, Charles Avenil, who, being unavoidably absent this evening, is represented by his nephew and other relatives. It is of a third, who joined our party on its route, and of the way in which he joined it, that I have more particularly to tell you.

“We were bound homewards from a sojourn in the volcanic isles of the North Pole, a district which had then recently been made available for settlement, through the perfection to which the science of aerial navigation and universal telegraphy had been brought. Surrounded at a distance by a rarely passable barrier of ice, these islands, nevertheless, enjoy a fair climate for a considerable portion of the year, owing in part to the presence of oceanic currents from the Equator, and in part to the prevalence of volcanic fires at a short distance beneath the soil.

“These facts are, doubtless, familiar to most persons present. But, as I desire to be fully comprehended by all, even the youngest, of my hearers, I must request indulgence if, for the sake of some, I go more fully into

detail than is requisite for others. The garb and tediousness naturally appertaining to seventy-five years of age, I shall endeavour to suppress.

“ Desiring to avoid the crowd of summer tourists, and to study without distraction the meteorological and magnetic phenomena presented by the country under the total deprivation of sunlight; as well as to examine at leisure the manners and traditions of the tribes whose discovery by the first aerial polar expedition made the great sensation of a comparatively recent generation, owing to the enormous and undoubted antiquity of their records, which showed that, though isolated from the rest of mankind for tens of thousands of years, they yet possessed the same characteristics of form, manners, and religious symbolism to which we had been wont to ascribe a far later origin—for these reasons, I say, we had extended our sojourn nearly to mid-winter, intending to return to England in time to spend the Festival of the Year with our friends at home.

“The winter solstice was just commencing

when we embarked on our return journey at the North Polar Aerial Transit Station, in the vehicle in which we had made the outward voyage, my own favourite aeromotive, a machine whose staunchness had been proved in many a long and stormy flight over all parts of the earth. How it came to fail me on this occasion is still a matter of doubt. It was probably through the action of a sudden blast of intensely cold air upon the cylinder of the decomposer (for it was a magnetic-atmospheric propeller). However, in mid-air, and mid-way upon our voyage, we were so crippled as to have no choice but to descend, and proceed either by land or sea, according to the nature of the element upon which we might alight, for the car was adapted to either purpose.

“ By aid of our parachute-apparatus, which, in spite of the intense cold, worked admirably, we were, in a very few minutes after the accident, slowly and steadily descending towards the earth. The only question of any importance was as to where precisely we should find ourselves on alighting. In the event of

further progress being impracticable, and the country being devoid of supplies, we still had sufficient to keep us until we could telegraph for, and receive aid.

“ It is true that in those days the network of wires which now cover both sea and land, like the lines of latitude and longitude in the maps devised by our ingenious ancestors, was but scantily diffused over the Arctic regions. But even then there were points for communication, though comparatively few and far between; and we did not doubt but that, alight where we might, we should be able, by travelling no very great distance, either by land or sea, to summons from the Central Home Dépôt an aeromotive to our relief.

“ And here I must be pardoned a digression if, for the sake of these little ones, I stop a moment to call their attention to the blessings which civilisation has conferred upon the world in our days. Once upon a time, and for myriads of ages, it was a chief business of one generation of men to destroy the improvements made by another. Amid the universal wreck and havoc of those Ages of

War, such a scheme as our universal network of telegraph-wires would have been impossible, if only for its costliness. It is true that a war involving equal, or even greater outlay, would have been undertaken with readiness and lightness of heart, so that it was not the cost alone that interfered, but the fact that humanity was still in its destructive stage, and therefore disinclined to make the same effort on behalf of construction. It is because we have got rid of the waste of war, and vast armaments for national offence and defence, and no longer absorb labour in useless works, or withdraw it from working altogether, that we have been able to construct and maintain works of such vast magnitude and utility as the Floating Oceanic Telegraph System, and the corresponding Terrestrial Service.

“ Our precise position was unknown to us. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been of little consequence. Such was the speed of my aeromotive—scarcely surpassed even by later inventions—that she must have been very far out of her course to be unable to recover it in a few hours. The voyage to

the Pole is simple enough. Travellers have but to steer northward until the needle points vertically downwards, and then to look about for a spot on which to alight. Twenty-four hours due north, at an average speed of a hundred miles an hour, is bound to bring them in sight of the volcanic fires which, rising from the summits of the Polar Mountains, make such convenient beacons for aeronauts. The time, however, varies somewhat, owing to the action of the polar atmospheric currents, which frequently divert the traveller from his direct course, and compel him to approach the Pole in a spiral direction.

“Similarly, in returning from the Pole, the spiral direction is taken at the start, as it happened in our case ; and it was the impossibility of ascertaining the velocity of these currents that prevented us from calculating our position. In any other region we should have remained aloft until daylight, and then leisurely selected a spot whereon to descend. But as the accident to our machinery occurred in the middle of an arctic winter, when the night is several months in duration, it was

impossible to remain floating about waiting for daylight.

“Well, when it was indicated by the barometer that we must be in the lower stratum of air, and therefore very close to the earth’s surface, we adjusted our electric-reflector lamp so as to project its brilliant column of light directly downwards. All that we discovered, however, was the fact that on all sides, as far as we could see, the earth was covered by a mist so dense as to conceal entirely from our view the spot we were approaching. We were therefore unable to determine whether it was for contact with a solid or a fluid element that we ought to be prepared.

“Descending very slowly and cautiously; checking our downward movement by working the spiral fans of our machine with our hands, and watching intently for any sight or sound that might indicate our whereabouts, we were disposed to be somewhat appalled by the intense stillness that prevailed. Of course, high up, the stillness is equally intense, save only when broken by the noise of the

propelling machinery, and the rushing by of the air. But there, close to the earth, its characteristics seemed different. I have no doubt my young friend, Lawrence, or at least Mr. Avenil, junior, has heard his relation speak of the impression it made upon us——”

“I remember,” said Avenil, “my uncle saying that Wilmer’s father, who was then about fifteen years old, asked if it were possible that they had missed the earth and got foul of the dark side of the moon, or some asteroid in which light and life are extinct; and that as he was speaking you were all knocked off your seats as if by some invisible vindicator of the honour of the heavenly body in question.”

“True, he was of a poetical temperament, like his son after him. But the suggestion turned out to be more appropriate than at first appeared likely. It was neither earth nor ocean that was about to receive us. Our first intimation that we were nearing anything, came in the form of a blow from some unseen body. Recoiling a little, we continued our slow descent, until presently we received

another concussion ; a slighter one, for we rebounded but a very little way from the substance which had given it. The next sensation was that of sliding down a nearly perpendicular slope. It was clear that we were alighting upon the side of a steep mountain ; and supposing that we were in about the eightieth degree of latitude, I hoped to find ourselves either on the north coast of Greenland, or in Spitzbergen, or on some other land that borders on the Arctic circle, and therefore within reach of a telegraph point, and consequently of succour : for points had recently been placed upon all the principal summits for the convenience of aerial voyagers. That is, upon the principal permanent summits ; for of course icebergs were not taken into account ; and it was upon a gigantic iceberg that, on finally settling down, we found ourselves safely deposited."

CHAPTER II.

“HE first thing to be investigated was the practicability of repairing our crippled machinery, with a view to continuing our voyage.

A little examination showed that this was out of the question. The next point was whether we could reach the edge of the floe, and launch the car upon the open sea. Before this could be done, it was necessary that the mist should clear off, for that was so dense as utterly to defy the rays of our reflector. A third point to be determined was that of the berg's mobility, that is, whether it was upon a motionless continent, or a drifting island that we had alighted.

“ In the meantime, it was necessary to take precautions against the cold. By the aid of

our reflector, we ascertained that we had slidden into a sort of wedge-shaped hollow, or crater, with sides vertical or overhanging, rising some fifteen or twenty feet above us all round, except on the side nearly facing the declivity of the berg, where there was an opening some yards in width. The bottom of our crater was tolerably smooth and level, and so, taking all things into consideration, we decided that we could not do better than remain there for the present. And in a little while after touching ground, or rather ice, we were snugly ensconced in the angle of the hollow, between solid encircling walls of green ice, which, inclining over head, made an admirable shelter, especially when supplemented by the floaters of the aeromotive, which we detached for the purpose. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say we were comfortably settled, both as regards our mental and our physical condition, for those with me had too much confidence in me, and I had too much confidence in the resources still left to us by science, to think of despairing of our ultimate safety.

“Let me enumerate those resources. It was still mid-winter, so that the berg would not melt or turn over. We had provisions that might last us a couple of weeks or more, and we might add to our store by catching some seals or bears. Our ice-house was so warm that we could save all our combustibles for the purpose of illumination. It is true there was not much chance at that season of a traveller passing over our heads, or of his perceiving our signals of distress, if there were one. But there was a chance, and it was my main hope, though its success depended upon the thickness of the ice, and upon our finding an aperture through which we could get at the water. This, again, however, would be of little use, unless our resting-place were in motion, for the chance consisted in our being able to drop a grappling line through into the sea, and hooking up a wire by which we could at once communicate with home, and summon relief. The floating telegraphs have all been constructed with this view ; so that persons at sea are always within a few miles of some link in the magnetic network. We knew that

it was not impossible that even at that moment, while upon the top of the ice-floe, its under side might be in contact with one of these wires, and that it was only necessary to reach it in order to obtain aid in a few hours.

“ But to this desirable end two things were almost certainly necessary. We must get at the water in order to sink our line ; and we must be in motion in order to catch the wire. This once caught, any one of the lads of my party could communicate with home by means of his magnetic pocket-speaker, as readily as tell the time by his watch.

“ It is a strangely uncomfortable sensation, that of being in the dark, and without the slightest notion of the kind of place one is in. Beside the discomfort we experienced on this account, there was the necessity of learning something about our immediate surroundings, if we were to escape by leaving them. So we spent much time in endeavouring to grope around our cave. Whoever undertook the office of explorer, was always made fast by a cord to keep him from slipping away or

otherwise being lost. We made several of these attempts without any satisfactory result, for the ice sloped away so steeply on all sides when we had got just outside the cave, that it was with difficulty we could draw the explorer back to us. It seemed precisely as if we were in the crater of a volcano, with a break in the wall on one side. The thickness of the fog continued to neutralise all attempts to gauge the darkness with the reflector.

“My last attempt in this direction was prompted by a surmise of so uncomfortable a nature, that I was anxious to keep it to myself. I had, for reasons obvious to the scientific mind, erected the aeromotive's pendulum in the centre of our nook, so as to be always readily observable, and I had given the lads strict injunctions to communicate to me its slightest movement. For the first day or two it was motionless. Then occasional tremors were observed to be passing through it. This made me watch anxiously for the next development. The fog was our chief enemy in the present. A steady oscillation of the pendulum would indicate a rolling motion

in the ice, that could only proceed from a storm, which though at first distant, would in all probability soon arrive and disperse the fog. The larger and more compact the ice-field, the smaller would be the arc described by the pendulum. This was obvious. It ought to have been equally obvious that the higher we were above the sea-level, the larger that arc would be. But I confess that this had not occurred to me at the time of which I am now speaking. The situation was far from being a familiar one. Mountains don't rock or roll.

“Well, it was the period we treated as night, and for which we turned in to sleep, when I was watching the movements of the pendulum with a perplexity that increased as they increased and varied. I thought every one except myself was asleep. Suddenly, to my astonishment and alarm, the pendulum, instead of going backwards and forwards over the diameter of the circle inscribed below it, changed its direction, and described a circular movement, passing completely round over the circumference of the indicating circle.

“ ‘It’s no use, Master Bertie,’ said a voice which at first startled me by its unexpectedness, but which I recognised as that of the young Avenil, who, instead of sleeping, had been quietly exercising his precociously scientific faculties in watching the pendulum, and drawing his own inferences. ‘It’s no use your trying to keep things to yourself, for fear of frightening us. Look at this rod.’

“ Resting one end of a short bar upon the floor, he made the other end slowly describe a circle in the air.

“ ‘This is where we are,’ he said, pointing to the upper end of the bar. ‘It’s just as well we didn’t lower any of the boys further down when we were prospecting the outside of our hollow tree. I shall go to sleep now. Good-night.’

“ He had made the discovery first, a discovery which caused me to gasp with apprehension. At that moment a rushing sound as of wind attracted my attention. I went to the aperture of the cave and looked out. The sight confirmed my worst fears. The fog was entirely gone. Over head shone the

stars out of a sky intensely crystalline and black, save where the streamers of an Aurora darted their pale colours athwart it. Towering before me was the steep slope of the loftiest portion of the berg, adown the side of which we had slidden ; and below me and on all sides were depths apparently unfathomable. To make sure before communicating my discovery, I returned into the cave and brought out the reflector. Turning on the light to its fullest extent, and directing the rays downwards, the whole truth was revealed. It was upon no level ice-field that we had alighted, nor even at the foot of an ice precipice, but on the top of one of the highest peaks of a lofty berg, whence descent seemed to be impossible. And not only was the berg in motion, but, as the pendulum indicated, it was rolling as if approaching the period when through the action of a warm sea-current upon its immersed portion, it was liable to turn completely over.

“ However, as the danger of such a catastrophe did not appear to be imminent, the discovery I had made still afforded room for

hope. We were in motion. That was a valuable fact. The area of the ice was limited, so that the water could not be very far from the base of our eminence. This too was important. The rolling proved us to be detached from any field. Even though it should be impossible to descend from the peak, we might be able to reach the sea with a grappling line, and telegraph home for relief. If we succeeded in doing this, the only thing that then remained for us to do, would be to keep our position so brightly illuminated, that the Relief would be able to see us and take us off; for not knowing where we were, we could not tell them where to look for us.

“ These things passed through my mind as I stood by the entrance to the cave. Returning within, I was accosted by Avenil, who said,

“ ‘ I have been making some calculations in my head, and am very much inclined to think we must be on the top of a pretty high old berg. What have you seen? Is the fog gone yet?’

“ Telling him to wrap his furs closely

around him (we all had dresses of fur, double ones with fur on both sides), I took him outside and showed him our position.

“ ‘I suppose,’ he said, ‘that these things take to rocking and rolling a long time before they can tumble over, so that we need not trouble ourselves about that.’

“ ‘Could we not,’ he then asked, ‘find out whether it is ice or water down below, by firing some shots down?’

“ ‘Certainly,’ I said, ‘if we had been provided with a gun.’

“ ‘I have my piece with me,’ he replied, ‘and some percussion bullets left from the stock I brought out with me.’

“ I begged him to get them out at once, as if the fog came on again they would be of no use.

“ The gun was soon ready, and the whole party came and stood on the ledge to watch the experiment.

“ The first shot was directed against the face of the berg opposite to us, in order that we might learn the effect of the concussion on what we knew to be solid ice, before discharg-

ing one into the unknown void below. The bullet struck and exploded, tearing away large splinters and hurling them into the air, whence they fell into the abyss. We then fired several shots downwards at various angles, some to a distance of probably two or three hundred yards (for it was but a pocket-piece, and scarcely able to carry farther). They all exploded, as if against a hard substance, making a noise that amid those icy silences seemed terrific. We then bethought us of lighting up the most distant points the gun would reach, by discharging some small fire-balls; and I returned into the cave to prepare them from a combination of Avenil's explosives, and some of the reflector's magnesium. They answered their purpose admirably, but proved still more conclusively that no open water was accessible to us, and therefore no room for drifting, except with a vast mass, and probably therefore no telegraph wire accessible, or means of communicating with home, and no prospect of relief.

“The experiments which forced this melancholy conclusion upon me being over, it was

with a heavy heart that I led the way back into the cave, and seated myself in silence beside the pendulum.

“Avenil, who was the oldest of the lads, placed himself beside me, and after a short silence, remarked—

“‘It is lucky that I am one of the lightest, as well as in other ways the fittest, of the party for the job. Don’t you think, Bertie, we had better set to work at once?’

“‘It seems the only hope,’ I answered; ‘but I cannot bear the thought either of letting one go alone or of leaving any behind, and in such a place as this.’

“I said this because I thought that he meant that with but one or two persons in it, the aeromotive could be worked by hand power, and that he would venture forth in it to seek aid.

“‘No, no, I don’t mean that,’ he exclaimed, when I had explained my thought. ‘Why, Bertie, old man, the idea of missing your Christmas dinner is affecting your brain! Did you not notice that the wind has set in strongly from the south, so that there would

be no chance of working against it by hand? I meant that I would be the first to descend the berg by a rope and explore the lower part of the floe more closely; and if I could find a likely spot, commence boring or blasting a hole to let our grappling hook through. I suppose we have line enough to scale any possible berg?’

“I reminded him that the plan would only answer upon a thin ice-field, whereas we had two-thirds of our mass below the surface of the water; but he said that there might be thin ice or even crevices close by, and that at any rate it must have an end or an edge somewhere, and that whatever the risk it was necessary for some one to run it, and who better than he?

“I declared that if any one made the attempt it should be myself, and that I would set about it to-morrow; but he exclaimed—

“‘To-morrow! why, dear Bertie, how forgetful you have become—you who are famous for always thinking of everything, and everybody, except yourself. It is all one long day, or rather night, here.’

“ ‘The thought of you all, and of your parents,’ I said, ‘will come over me at times, and is almost more than I can bear. But call it what you will, day or night, the next twelve hours will see the turn of the sun. Would that we might be safe here until his light travels so far north. But we have not food for so long a time, or fuel to maintain the heat for converting the ice into water for drinking, even if the berg were safe from overturning. But what are the lads firing again for?’ I asked, for I thought I heard a fresh discharge.

“As I spoke, young Wilmer rushed into the cave, crying out that our shots had been taken for signals, and were being answered from a balloon or something that seemed to be coming towards us.

“Scarcely crediting my senses, I hastened out, and was just in time to hear another discharge, apparently to the south, and but a short distance off. Gazing intently in that direction, we presently discovered a light attached to what appeared to be a large old-fashioned balloon coming along with the wind.

“ ‘ More victims,’ I muttered to myself, for I knew that a machine of that build could never control its course in anything stronger than a light wind. Our own machine was on the spiral fan system, and, with sufficient motive power, could screw its way right into any wind. This was of the old gaseous type ; and though it was not unusual for travellers to take a short cut over the Pole from one hemisphere to the other, this was not the vehicle to do it in.

“ Observing that the stranger was keeping a direct course for us, I told the boys to get out the gun again, and a fresh supply of magnesium, adding that we would let the strangers see as well as hear us, and that it would be curious indeed if we were to have company there.

“ ‘ A Christmas party ! a Christmas party on an iceberg !’ they shouted.

“ ‘ And perhaps,’ added Avenil, ‘ they will be able to take us off.’

“ When they were quiet, I said to them—

“ ‘ My boys, that balloon is in distress. She is either steered by a novice, or by one too

weak to keep her steady. I wish the wind would lull ; she will sweep past us to a certainty. Cease firing, and keep the reflector turned on her. We shall be able to speak her presently.'

"It was a moment of intense anxiety as she neared us. It was clear that she was desirous of coming to anchor, for her grapples were all out hanging far below her, so far that I wondered they did not catch in the water, and either retard her progress or drag her down. As it was, she had a strange jerky motion, which at first I was at a loss to account for. Studying her carefully through my glass, I discovered the cause. She was skimming the ice ; and the jerks were caused by the grapples catching the edges of the hummocks and then slipping off and catching again. She was on a lower level than ourselves.

"I had scarcely made this observation when we all cried—

" ' Ah !'

"For at that moment she made a sudden leap upward as if lightened of a considerable

load, and indeed, I thought I saw a large package or something drop from her. A few moments more and she rushed upon our berg, her lines striking against the walls of our cavern, and she herself striking against the side of the peak far above us, exactly as we had done, only with much greater violence, and from another direction.

“Without pausing a moment to see what she would do next, but shouting at the top of my voice to encourage the inmates—if living inmate she still had, for I had begun to doubt it, so strange had been all her ways since the last signal had been discharged—I and the lads seized’ hold of the grappling lines and carried them into the cave, where we made them fast by wedging them into a great crevice in the ice. Fortunately the arrest of the balloon against the berg had left them’ slack, or they would have been torn away from our grasp. Hastening out again, we perceived her clinging to the precipice above us, as if rubbing herself uneasily against its sloping front. I then hailed her in several different languages successively, the last time being in

Arabic, for the make of the grapples made me take her for an Oriental of some kind. This time I was rewarded by hearing a faint voice speaking in the same tongue, and querulously complaining of something or other.

“So we set to work to haul her in to us. She came more easily than we expected, for she had lost much of her buoyancy with the blow of the contact—a contact partly caused, as on reflection seemed probable, both in her case and in our own, by the attraction of the gigantic iceberg.”

CHAPTER III.

“HILE gently drawing in the stranger towards us, I did my best to encourage the inmates by addressing to them kindly phrases in the same tongue ; and, as I must confess, I felt a little ruffled at not getting a single word in response. At length the car, which was elaborately constructed of the finest basket work and silk, was safely lodged within our crater, its huge floaters, still partially distended with gas, occupying a great portion of the cavity. Fortunately the wind had entirely lulled ; but to prevent it from embarrassing us should it rise again, by its action on the mass, I directed the lads to gather up the folds as the gas escaped, and pack them away in the recesses

of the cave. I then clambered up into the car.

“It was an immense and unwieldy affair, evidently designed by and for people who were greater adepts in luxury than in science. What perplexed me most was the absolute quietude of all within. Opening a trap-door, and descending a flight of steps, I found myself in a small chamber, where by the light of a dim lamp, I perceived an old man of most venerable aspect, with long white hair and beard, evidently an Oriental, reclining on a divan, and apparently more dead than alive.

“Hearing me enter, he said, in a tone of mingled reproach and entreaty, but without glancing toward me—

“‘Zöe, why so long absent? Surely the car needed not guidance so much as I needed thee?’

“He had scarcely finished his utterance when a sharp little cry broke from an adjoining chamber, which caused the old man to start and turn towards me. Whether the astonished look of his glistening eyes was caused most by the appearance of a stranger,

or by the cry he had just heard, I could not tell, but he was evidently disturbed at both.

“ ‘Can I help you?’ I enquired, for I found him easily intelligible. We aerialists, you must know, are obliged to be conversant with the tongues of all civilised people.

“ ‘Zœe ought to have announced you,’ he said, with a gesture of courtesy. ‘I presume that you have come on board us from some balloon that we have met. I fear I am too ill to converse with you. Zœe will speak for me. Methought I heard an infant’s voice. You are a foreigner. Do foreigners carry young children on such voyages?’

“ ‘I think you are in some error,’ I returned, ‘as to the precise position of your balloon. It is because I saw you were in some difficulty that I have come on board. Could I find her you named, or any other of the passengers, I would not intrude upon you.’

“ ‘Not find Zœe!’ he exclaimed. ‘She was here just now, and only left me to look after the machinery and lights. That is always her part in our air-trips. Since we left

Damascus she has not been so long absent from me.'

"His utter ignorance of what had happened to his balloon led me to surmise that his companion had met with some accident—probably fallen out immediately after discharging the signals which had attracted our attention.

"At that moment the cry was renewed. Unhooking the lamp from its chain, I went into the adjoining compartment, where I found an infant in a hastily-improvised cot.

"At the sight of the light, the cry ceased, and I took the child, cot and all, and set them down beside the old man.

" 'I suppose this is *her* child of whom you were speaking,' I said. 'It is, indeed, young to—'

" 'Man!' he cried, almost raising himself from his couch. '*Her* child! what mean you?'

"I refrained from speaking, and he gazed on it awhile with a wondering and troubled mien, muttering to himself words which I could not catch. Presently he said again,—

“ ‘Where can Zöe be?’

“ It was clear that there was no alternative but to tell him all, so far as I knew it, respecting his situation. When I had concluded, and made him comprehend that his companion must have been precipitated to the earth and lost, and that the sole inmates of the balloon were himself and a new-born infant, and that he had come down on an ice-field in the Arctic seas, and also that though we would do all in our power to aid him, we almost despaired of our own extrication, and, indeed, had hailed his approach as that of a possible deliverer to ourselves,—he said, in a tone of devout resignation,—

“ ‘I understand it all now. It was willed. Save her child, if it be possible. You will find that here which will repay you. For me, I die.’

“ And covering his face, he murmured,—

“ ‘How she must have suffered through my blindness. Suffered in silence and alone. Would that her mother had lived. Zöe, my two Zöes, I come. Receive and forgive!’

“ Thinking it best to leave him awhile to his grief, I quitted the car and returned to my party, who were in no little curiosity about our visitant. They had completed their work of expelling the gas, and were folding up the bulky fabric as I had directed them. I now stopped this, and said we would spread it partly overhead as a ceiling, and partly under foot as a carpet, in order to shelter the newcomers who were unable to help themselves.

“ ‘ Why, who and what are they ? ’ ” they inquired, all speaking at once.

“ ‘ In the first place,’ I told them, ‘ there is an old man, a very venerable old man, with snowy hair and dark piercing eyes, who has lately left Damascus, and says he is going to die. In the second place, there was a young woman, his daughter, who took care of him, but has now disappeared.’

“ ‘ Quite lately ? ’ asked Avenil.

“ ‘ So lately that he did not know of it, and was expecting to see her when I entered.’

“ ‘ Depend upon it, it was her falling out

that made the balloon rise so suddenly, while we were watching it,' he said.

"I agreed that this seemed probable, and added, 'In the third place, there is a baby; which, seeing that the old man knew nothing about it until I discovered it, must have been introduced by the young woman very shortly before her disappearance.'

" 'The poor little thing won't survive her long in these regions,' said one.

" 'And who else is there? and why don't they show themselves?' asked another.

"I told them that there was no one else; and that of these two the old man had made up his mind to die, and committed the infant to my charge, for his mind was as broken with grief as his body with age.

" 'And the balloon is of no use to carry us away from this place,' said one, in a tone of disappointment.

"I said probably not, but that at any rate we might find some supplies which we could turn to account. And then selecting young Wilmer—your father, Lawrence—as the gentlest and most tender of the lads, I re-entered the

chamber. The old man was still alive, but moaning feebly; and the child was so fast asleep, that I thought its mother must have given it a cordial before leaving it, a surmise that was afterwards confirmed by my finding a vial beneath the head of the couch.

“I knew little of medicine, and nothing of the management of children, but having a vague idea that the principal agencies in sustaining their vitality are air, food, sleep, and warmth, I directed young Wilmer to open some cases which were in the chamber, and see if they contained any nutriment likely to be suitable for the child, while I endeavoured to rouse the old man to action of some kind. The chamber, which had evidently been constructed with a view to a warmer climate than that of the Arctic regions, was rapidly losing the heat I had found oppressive on my first visit, a heat supplied by the machinery of the balloon, and therefore no longer sustained now that the machinery was at rest. Its atmosphere, however, was far from pure and wholesome. So I begged the old man to let me remove him and the child to our own

more roomy abode. But all my efforts were unheeded. He refused to move or to be consoled, and by turns murmured the names of Zöe and Solomon, and something about a talisman, whose aid he seemed to be invoking for the child.

“In the meantime, young Wilmer had been to work to good purpose. He had found a case containing a preparation of milk, solidified into small bars. After tasting these, I determined to administer them to the infant. Not to make this part of my story too long, I will state at once that the old man died a few hours after his descent, having uttered nothing that could give us a clue to his name; and, indeed, only once speaking coherently, on which occasion he asked the month and day of the year, and said something which I took for an adjuration addressed to the sun.

“The child became our first care, and we seemed tacitly to regard it as a point of honour to save ourselves in order to save it, and rear it to manhood. I say manhood, for it proved to be a boy. This important discovery was made on the occasion of the ques-

tion being started as to what we should call it. We were sitting, soon after its arrival, around our camp illuminator and warmer, which was no other than our electro-magnesian reflector already mentioned, and which was so constructed as to be readily convertible into a small and luminous stove; young Wilmer, in his function of nurse, held the infant on his knees, and it was gazing, with eyes wide open, at the light. It never cried, which was a great comfort to us male creatures, for we should have been terribly puzzled what to do if it had; and it had taken very kindly to the food we had given it. Well, we were sitting thus when some one suggested that we ought to call it Zöe.

“ ‘Zöe, indeed!’ exclaimed nurse Wilmer, indignantly; ‘why, it’s a boy!’

“The observation showed how judicious had been my choice of him for nurse. The possibility of such a thing had not occurred to anyone else. We could not resist having a good laugh over our dulness, and, to our surprise, the child, as if because it then heard human voices for the first time, actually joined

in the laugh by making a sort of crowing noise.

“ ‘ Is there a name on the balloon, that will do ? ’ asked one of the lads. But the balloon bore no name. Another suggested something implying ice or air ; and it was even proposed to call it Ariel, and give it one of my names for surname. Ariel Bertie, we thought, sounded well, and I was strongly inclined to adopt this suggestion ; the more as I had fully made up my mind to adopt the child as my own, should I ever succeed in escaping from that place, and reaching home with it in safety. The similarity of the name, I considered, would make it appear to strangers as if it were really a blood relation. The child itself, too, seemed by its crowing to approve, at least of having some distinctive name.

“ However, young Wilmer, looking up from it, said that he had read in an old story-book, of a wild Indian, who, being on a desolate island, was rescued from death by a white man, and in gratitude devoted himself to the white man’s service, and was called after the

day of the week on which he had been saved,
—Friday.

“ ‘ And as this is the last day of the winter solstice, and we may regard him as a little ray from heaven to lighten our gloom, let one of his names be Christmas !’

“ So with vehement rapidity exclaimed young Avenil ; and, as if in approbation of the proposal, the infant chirped and crowed with redoubled energy.

“ ‘ Listen ! it is singing a carol,’ cried nurse Wilmer. ‘ A Christmas Carol—hear its carolling ?’

“ ‘ Then call it one,’ said Avenil.

“ ‘ One what ?’ I asked.

“ ‘ Christmas Carol. It’s a charming name.’

“ ‘ And we will call it Crissy, for short,’ said the boy-nurse, bending down and kissing the child, and then handing it round for each one of us to kiss as we repeated the name, Christmas Carol.

“ We all agreed it was a charming name, and wonderfully appropriate, from whatever point of view we regarded it. For it had

come at the very birth of the year, when the days first begin to wax after the winter solstice, and in the moment of our deepest despair; and we spoke of the old man just dead, its grandfather, as the old year, and of its mother Zöe, as the life that went out in giving it life. And as we looked on the infant that had so wondrously descended among us, and repeated the name whereby it was to be known among men, we forgot the peril we were still in, and warmed towards the most ancient of sciences, Astronomy, and the poetry of its kindred Mythology, and were, I verily believe, at that moment, about the happiest party on earth."

CHAPTER IV.

“ DEEP, broad crevice ran across one corner of the floor of our cavern. In this we deposited the body of the old man, filling it up above him with broken bits of ice, which when driven in with blows became welded together, forming a sarcophagus of clear crystal, warranted not only not to consume the body, but to preserve it from decay, until the berg itself should finally bow its head and sink and melt in the sea.

“The next task was to investigate the nature and contents of the balloon. Young Avenil set himself to make an examination of the machinery. The other lads rifled the stores, and I sought for some document by which we

might learn something of the history of the late occupants.

“It was little substantial help that I expected to get from any discoveries we might make. It was unlikely that the stock of provisions would go far towards keeping us alive for the five or six weeks still remaining of utter darkness, during which it would be hopeless to attempt to leave the berg. Fitted, as the machine probably was, to be a mere pleasure-conveyance of a wealthy and luxurious Damascene family, it was not likely to contain more than was sufficient for a short trip. But what we found led us to a different conclusion. Not only was it overladen with provisions and luxuries sufficient to sustain in comfort a number of persons for several weeks, but it contained jewels and money to a great value. So that, altogether, we were led to conclude that the old man and his daughter were, probably in consequence of some unpleasantness connected with the latter’s situation, in the act of emigrating with all their property in search of a new home, when by reason of illness, or storms, they

were driven out of their course, and carried by the currents of the atmosphere to the Arctic Seas.

“ The discoveries I had made intensified the interest I already felt in the child. It was evidently the heir to people of consideration, and wealth that would enable it to take up any position in the world for which it might by character and abilities be fitted.

“ So occupied was I with these reflections, that I had not given my mind to what was really of far more importance to us just then, than anything else in the world ; namely, the possibility of turning the balloon to account in contriving our escape. There was clearly no other way, for the berg had evidently reunited with the masses of ice around it, as was shown by its perfect immobility ; and a journey over the ice-field would be attended by hardships that must be fatal to at least one member of the party. Since the stars had become visible, there had been no difficulty in ascertaining our latitude. It was a degree or two above that of Spitzbergen : that is, the polar distance of our berg was about eight

degrees. About our longitude we were necessarily still in the dark ; and our only hope of finding it lay in our hooking the telegraph. This, however, was practically of no consequence, as the very size of our berg showed that we must be too far from any coast for us to attempt to reach it over the ice. By knowing the latitude we were enabled to determine the period remaining of total darkness. And this, as I have mentioned, had still five or six weeks to run.

“ I was talking over these matters with the lads, as we sat round our little stove, the child as usual lying on young Wilmer’s lap, and flourishing marvellously, when Avenil abruptly asked me who was the maker of the broken cylinder of our aeromotive, and whether the size and number were stamped upon it ?

“ Thinking he was indulging in visions of a claim for damages against the manufacturer on our return home, I twitted him on the score of his reflections taking a more sordid and less practical turn than usual.

“ He had then the same imperturbable

good temper that distinguishes him in his present exalted position, and he made no reply to my taunt. But after the rest of the party had turned in and were asleep, he beckoned to me to take the lamp and come outside our place of shelter. When I got there, he said—

“ ‘What I want to know is this :—can the fans be worked with a less powerful decomposer than the one we have broken ?’ ”

“ I said, certainly ; the only difference would be in our speed ; but that I did not care about that, for, provided we had power enough to carry us aloft, and sustain us there, the winds would be sure sooner or later to carry us to some eligible place for descending. At any rate we could hardly be in a worse one.

“ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘now will you answer my question about the broken cylinder ?’ ”

“ I mentioned the maker’s name, and the number of the piece.

“ ‘Now look at this,’ he said, ‘and tell me what you think of it.’ And he led me to the machinery of the strange balloon, which he

had been taking to pieces, and uncovering the cylinder, which he had concealed, bade me look at it.

“ I did look at it, and then at the machinery of which it formed a part, and then at the boy. And then I said—

“ ‘ Do any of the others know of this ?’

“ ‘ Of course not,’ he answered. ‘ I was not going to raise hopes only to have them disappointed. But what do you think of it ?’

“ ‘ Think of it ? Why that this cylinder, though less powerful than our own, is by the same maker, and of precisely the same kind, and that it will take us up off the ice, and if we have moderate weather, enable us to steer homewards.’ And I grasped his hand in joyous revulsion of feeling at the immediate prospect of escape for my lads.

“ It is true that I ought sooner to have seen this possibility, as all the machinery used in the East is of British manufacture. But the events connected with the arrival of the balloon had occupied nearly all my thoughts. Besides, the acquisition of such an addition to our stock of provisions had removed

from my mind all apprehension for the present.

“ I will not detail the experiments which occupied the next two or three days. Suffice it to say, that after several trials we succeeded in fitting the new combination of machinery so as to give sufficient power for our purpose. The moment of our quitting the iceberg was one of intense emotion ; the thought of our various homes and the feelings we knew would be working there, had our position been known, dominating all others.

“ Next to this, the strongest feeling I verily believe was that of eagerness to save the child whose advent had so strangely ministered to our salvation, and of curiosity to see whether its subsequent career would correspond with its commencement.

“ The important question, in which direction we should steer, was soon decided in favour of home, though it was by much the longest journey. It is true we might easily have regained the Pole, which was but some eight degrees distant, and there we should have found a fresh vessel to take us home.

But the lads all shrank from a return to its gloomy though hospitable shores, and cried out for the sun, and the light, and home; and the little Criss carolled so cheerily at the sound of their acclamations, that I determined to undertake the longer voyage without more ado.

“ So we departed, rising slowly and steadily from off the cratered pinnacle of ice which had been our home for so many days; leaving on it a burning beacon, which remained in sight long after we had started. The air was perfectly calm; and so, slowly and without mishap, and glad not to rise very high, for fear of the effect of a rare atmosphere upon the child’s tender lungs, we steered for the invisible sun, remaining ignorant of our longitude until we had got well within the daylight.

“ When next we came near enough the earth to discern the character of the things upon it, we were pleased to find that we were coming among friends. For I espied the familiar outlines of one of those stereotyped stations for aerial and railway locomotion, with which

our Government has provided the whole of its Asiatic protectorate. And by the signal hoisted on it for the information of aerial travellers, we learnt that it was one of the north-eastern-most stations of British China.

“It soon appeared that we bore a more dilapidated aspect than we were aware of; for a large number of spectators assembled to witness our descent in the enclosure appointed for the purpose. At first they were disposed to make merry at our appearance; but when they beheld the gravity which we all steadfastly maintained as we stepped one by one out of the car, now properly secured by the station officials; and when finally young Wilmer came forth bearing the infant, laughing and crowing in his arms, and we proceeded to the Station Hotel, the curiosity, especially of the Chinese portion of the crowd, knew no bounds. They would have it that one of us was a woman in disguise; and then, that we must have abducted the child. Hearing murmurs to this effect, and not desiring to excite the hostility of the natives, I asked one of the officials in their hearing, if there was

a place of worship at hand, where a thanksgiving service for escape from great peril could be performed ; and learning that a Buddhist temple was near, I sent a liberal fee, to secure the services of the priest. I took care to say all this aloud, in the language of the country, for former experiences had taught me that the nearest way to the hearts of a barbarous people is by paying respect to their religion. And I knew from history that nothing had contributed more to induce the Chinese to entrust the political management of their empire to us on our retiring from India, when we had taught its people to govern themselves, and hold their own against the Russians ; or to dispose them favourably towards our beliefs, than the conviction that we should pay the same respect to their religion and customs that we showed to those of each other in our own country, as well as to those of the Hindoos.

“ I also sent for a native newspaper reporter.”

CHAPTER V.

“E were fortunate in finding a nurse for the infant in a young English widow of gentle nurture, who had just lost her own child, and was desirous of returning to England, her wedded relation having come to an end.”

[Here the old man's voice faltered, and became broken. The cause of his emotion was known to few beside myself; but he succeeded in mastering it, and presently went on.]

“We did not escape the usual penalty of novelty while we remained in the Mongol town. It was on the western borders of the sea of Japan that we had alighted. We were duly interviewed by the caterers for the

public press, especially those of the native religious papers which my act of piety had conciliated. Some of these were illustrated, and marvellous were the sketches they produced of our encampment on the ice-peak; for they had depicted faces of buried dead peering with open eyes through the lid of their crystal coffin, from the walls and floor of our crater; while watching over us was seen the shadowy form of their principal divinity,—the one to whom the temple I had patronised was specially dedicated. All these and other paintings were done in the same style of Chinese art that prevailed thousands of years ago; for they are the most conservative people in the world. I am inclined to believe that, like the horse, the bee, and many other highly-organised animals, the Chinese have long ago reached the utmost perfection of which their particular species is capable; so that they do not, like us, keep developing into new varieties. The period during which a race retains the faculty of changing for the better, which with us constitutes the secret of civilisation, has long

since been passed by them, and their sole care is to continue to exist without palpable deterioration. They are the bees of humanity, very ingenious and industrious, but they do not get on any further. They live only to repeat what has been done before over and over again. Their organisation has quenched individuality.

“It is possible, however, that such stereotyping of character is but a resultant from the stereotyping of conditions. Now the Japanese, who were long ago called the Englishmen of the East, form a wonderful contrast to their neighbours across the strait. But for us, China and its splendid coal-fields would long ago have been theirs.

“But I see one of my young friends opposite yawning. I am obliged to him for doing so. It was a needed reminder that mere reflections are apt to be tedious, especially when they have nothing to do with the subject in hand. And I undertook to relate facts, not reflections. In my excuse, let me tell you that the life I have led so much up in the air, and so much alone, without a sight

or a sound to attract the attention, and guided only by the needle, without reference to aught without,—like a soul by its internal ideal,—is very apt to make a man reflective. He comes to regard himself as a bystander to the world, and to think and talk about it as if he were not a part of it.

“We brought ourselves and the infant all safe to Europe and England by the Great Eastern Railway, the new nurse being timid about the air-voyage, and the physicians whom I consulted saying that her fears, if excited by being forced to undertake it, might have an injurious effect upon the child. I almost regretted nurse Wilmer when I heard this, so much did I prefer my own mode of travelling. But I gave in for the child’s sake, and amply was I repaid for so doing. There are angels in the real, as well as in the ideal world.”

And Bertie’s voice trembled again as he closed his manuscript.

CHAPTER VI.



THE work of which the foregoing narrative is to serve as commencement, will in reality be a joint production, to the greater portion of which I shall enact the part of editor rather than of author ; for it is derived from the reminiscences of the loving hearts of those who knew *him* best, and who, during its progress, have been continuously associated with me in our common home.

This home is no other than the well-known "Club" (as our ancestors taught us to name such institutions), already referred to under the name of *The Triangle*. As I hope our story will be read in regions whither the fame of *The Triangle* has not yet travelled, I will

here mention that it is the oldest, and as its members fondly believe, the most highly considered, of the institutions which have, more than any others, served to ameliorate the social life of modern times. It has been the model for the numberless similar clubs which have now long existed among all kinds and classes of civilised people, and in their perfection of economy and organisation, brought facilities for comfort, fellowship, and culture otherwise unattainable, within easy reach of every rank and grade of life, without detriment to domesticity or individuality. And here I may remark that in no respect does our idea of perfection in organisation differ from that of antiquity more than in this,—that while formerly its highest triumph was to repress, so now its sole, or at least main, aim is to develop individuality. Other clubs have such names as *The Right-angled Triangle*, *The Obtuse-angled Triangle*, or *The Acute-angled Triangle*, and are called for short, *The Right*, *The Obtuse*, or *The Acute*. There is also the *Isosceles*, and the *Equilateral*. Ours alone is known as *The Triangle*.

The determining idea of all these institutions is derived from the fundamental plan of human life. They consist, therefore, of three departments, each distinct and complete in itself, yet all inseparably united to form an harmonious whole. One angle of the building is devoted to men, another to women, and the third to both in common, with their families.

Formerly it was only in this last section of the building that the inhabitants of the various divisions could meet together, except by calling upon each other privately by an external entrance. Now, each division has its own hall private to itself, the common one for all having recently been constructed. In the opinion of the members of The Triangle, the propinquity of the family folks is as desirable as that of others. We are, therefore, emphatically an Equilateral Triangle, and dispense altogether with diagonals or bi-sections; for these involve an expedient which we hold to be subversive of the essential significance of the club principle. The example of the Square, Rectangular, or Parallelogrammatical

Clubs, which have been started as an improvement upon the Triangular ones, and which provide a fourth and separate division for the exclusive use of couples ungifted with offspring, has never obtained favour at *The Triangle*.

It is by the frank adoption of the Triangular principle that modern society has reconciled the long-conflicting ideas of the Home and the Commune. Co-existing harmoniously beneath the same roof, the former is free from invasion or dictation from without, while the latter involves no deprivation of domesticity or individuality. *Convenience, not interference*, is their motto. We thus vindicate our claim to be the most perfect exponents of the most perfect civilisation yet attained,—the civilisation which, while affording complete security, ministers also to the promotion of individuality and the development of the affections.

It was this that endeared *The Triangle* to the great and loving heart of him whose loss we are now so sorely lamenting. A multiplication of distinctions beyond those broadly

indicated by life itself, he regarded as a departure from the basis of Nature, and a return to the system which proved so disastrous to our ancestors.

These, as the lessons of our childhood inform us, used to imagine that they had detected imperfections in the structure of the universe, and particularly of the moral world ; and in the plenitude of their presumption set themselves to improve upon natural order by artificial expedients contrived without reference to the principles of that order. Their sentiment of humanity was undermined by their sentiment of patriotism ; and their sentiment of patriotism was undermined by the yet more sub-divisional character of their religion. It was only through the rise of a spirit superior to both patriotism and religion (as then understood), that our country was rescued from falling into utter disintegration and insignificance.

The struggle by which this happy era was inaugurated was a tremendous one : and inasmuch as it was a struggle of principles, apart from all material vested interests or

other forms of selfishness, it is regarded by us as constituting the grandest period in our history.

As some of its details will necessarily be alluded to in the course of our narrative, I will not here say more respecting it than that its result was to extinguish for ever, so far as the vast bulk of our population is concerned, that antagonism between the Church and the World, which had for centuries been the fount of woes innumerable to mankind ; and to obtain recognition of the essential identity of the two opposing forces. It is the return to the basis of Nature, through the abrogation of the ancient divorce between the various departments of the human understanding, that is symbolised in the triune form of our modern life. Hence the love borne to it by one who more vividly than any other of modern times realised the essential Oneness of Humanity, in its capabilities and significance, with its sub-standing and informing principle.

It must not be supposed that the idea of such an institution as *The Triangle* attained

its full development all at once. It required the *Emancipation* to restore the taste for the almost forgotten art of marriage. The demand for dwellings suitable for couples and families of moderate means, had led to the institution of Flats or Suites, and even of *Radials*, as a ring of houses was called, having a central kitchen and service in common. These were a great step in the promotion of comfort and economy; but they failed to minister to that fulness of social intercourse which all cultivated natures crave. For, however well adapted to each other a man and a woman may be, their intellectual capacities require to draw at least a part of their sustenance from without. Otherwise, domesticity itself becomes a bar to the maintenance of individuality.

To this end they must have a varied society within their reach. It was reserved for The Triangle to show how this want was to be met. People who watched with curiosity the growth of the great three-cornered building which overlooks the Hampstead Park, little thought that they were witnessing the birth

of a system that was to revolutionise human life. No greater proof of its perfect adaptation to all the wants of developed humanity could be found, than in its rapid extension to every class of the community. Even the artisan and the labourer now have their triangular clubs of residence—the club that civilises; in place of the “beershop” that brutalises—as our ancestors knew to their cost, though they were so terribly perplexed to find a substitute for the latter, that some of them went to the length of denouncing the social instinct altogether, as well as the use of all stimulating beverages!

Concerning The Triangle. I will here only add further, that it is situated in the heart of the *intellectual* quarter of London; so called because here dwell chiefly those who are devoted to literature, science, and art. To the east of this quarter lies the mercantile and industrial; to the west, the fashionable; and to the south, the governmental and legal quarter, the whole covering an area which to our ancestors of the earlier part of the Victorian era would have appeared monstrous and im-

possible. Yet it is not so much in a lateral direction that London has spread, as upwards, through the enormous elevation given to our modern buildings.

CHAPTER VII.



I SHALL now continue the narrative which Bertie has so well begun for me, and endeavour to weave into an harmonious whole the various items supplied me from the sources at my command. Next to Bertie Greathead, it is mainly from the Avenil family that I have drawn my information. The whole of the Wilmers, to whom I belong, early left the scene, and only reappeared on it towards the end.

It was by general acclamation of the whole party of the iceberg, and of their relatives, that Bertie undertook the charge of the little Christmas Carol. As his calling caused him frequently to be absent, and as the child's property promised to be considerable, Bertie

begged that the fathers of Avenil and of my father might be associated with him in the trust. This was done, and when my father and Avenil came of age they also were made trustees.

The only difficulty was about the place of residence for the child and Alma Nutrix, for so the new nurse was called. Bertie insisted on their living with him, so attached had he become to the child. But his bachelor's quarters were altogether too straitened to admit such a party. His fellow-guardians wished him to come into The Triangle. But he was not a member; and on making application, and being asked which division of the club he desired to join, he found himself ineligible for any. He could not have the child and its nurse with him in the single men's quarters; and he could not go with them to the single women's quarters. As for the married folks' division, he would not hear of it. He was not qualified, he said, and did not mean to be qualified, to occupy that department.

In the meantime, the child and nurse were

accommodated by the Avenils, in their own quarters in the club, and Bertie used to visit them there. The Avenils had thus an excellent opportunity of becoming well acquainted with Alma's character. What they saw of her led them to have a high regard for her, and it occurred to them that the best solution of the difficulty would be her marriage with Bertie. She, however, made no secret of her unwillingness to enter again upon an association of the kind. Bertie became more and more dissatisfied at the barrier to his complete ownership of the child. At length he abruptly, and some say very crossly, proposed to Alma, that as they both liked having the child with them, they should overcome their mutual aversion and be married, for the sake of the better taking care of it. She said, that if that was all he wanted, she had no objection; and so the couple, after entering into *a contract of the third class*, became with the infant, inmates of the married folks' quarters. It was said that they continued to be very cold and distant to each other for a considerable period after this.

But the child, who so early in its career had power thus to bring these two persons together in spite of themselves, exhibited its power yet more in reconciling them to their union afterwards. For, to the great amusement and delight of their friends, Bertie and Alma fairly fell in love with each other after their marriage ; and so long as she lived, no more truly attached couple was to be found. It was his reminiscence of this tender passage in his history that caused Bertie's voice to falter in his recital. She died when little Criss was between three and four years old, leaving no child of her own to divide Bertie's affection ; and has been sincerely mourned by him ever since.

Bertie then, for his own solace, took the child with him on an aerial journey. It had begun to pine a little, as if for its foster-mother. The journey did it so much good that Bertie concluded that, having been born in the air, the air was its natural element. After this it was his constant companion, until old enough to go to school. It was doubtless in a measure owing to the action of the life

aloft upon a peculiar temperament, that little Criss grew up to be the man he was. It served to develop a temperament which was itself the result of a union between two races of opposite characteristics. A careful examination of the contents of the balloon, made after Bertie's arrival in England, revealed letters and other documents which proved that the old man, though himself of Jewish extraction, had married an European woman; and that Criss's mother Zöe was their daughter, being named after her mother. She, again, had a husband or lover, who was a Greek, whose child Criss was. Her father hated this Greek, and believed him to be the emissary of enemies who were plotting against him. It was to escape from their malevolence that he had embarked in his balloon with his daughter and his wealth, intending to settle in some country where he would be more secure than in Syria. He was completely in the dark as to how far matters had gone between his daughter and her lover. It had been with a breaking heart, and on the eve of her expected confinement, that she

had received his command to enter the balloon and start instantly. She dared not disobey him. Her lover was not at hand. A hasty, blurred, half-finished letter which was found in the balloon, evidently intended for him, revealed much of the above. It remained doubtful whether her fall was accidental or intentional. The fact of her child being there, newly-born, and helpless, made it impossible that she could have contemplated abandoning it, if in her senses. But agony and terror have sometimes been known to induce women to do even this, under a condition of society in which they and their affections were regarded as the property of their parents or other relatives, and it was accounted a crime of the deepest turpitude, to assert a right of ownership in their own hearts and persons.

Thank heaven we have got so far past that stage of woman's long martyrdom, that her mistakes in the bestowal of her affections are now met by a smile of encouragement to be wiser in the future, and not by a fierce frown of unrelenting condemnation for all time to come.

Bertie found some confirmation of these conclusions afterwards, on visiting Damascus. There was much mystery about the old man ; and his sudden disappearance was only in keeping with all that was known of him. He was believed to be connected in some way with one of the ancient Royal Families of the East, and to be in constant fear of attempts on his life or property. Beside his house in Damascus, he had a summer residence on Lebanon ; and as no claimants had appeared for these, they were taken charge of by the authorities, to be kept sealed up for the period appointed by law in such cases.

Of Criss's father, the Greek lover of Zöe, Bertie found no trace whatever. And he and his fellow-guardians decided that it was not necessary to advertise the finding of the child and the property, inasmuch as there could be no doubt that any lawful claimant would not hesitate to advertise for them himself. No such advertisement appeared, and Bertie owned to himself that it was only with vast reluctance that he could have brought himself to yield his charge even to its own father.

The non-appearance of a claimant was therefore a great relief to him.

To one portion of the contents of the balloon I must recur ; it is a portion which plays an important part in my story.

The examination made by Bertie on the iceberg had necessarily been hasty and superficial. It was shortly after reaching home that he requested the elder Avenil and Wilmer to be present at the opening of the boxes, as he considered whatever of value they might contain to be the property of the child, and therefore vested in them jointly as its trustees.

Mr. Avenil's knowledge of mineralogy was sufficient to enable him to perceive that some of the gems were of great value. A jeweller with whom he was acquainted being called in, the report he gave was so startling, that they determined, with the jeweller's advice, to consult a first-class diamond merchant. There was one in London at that moment, a Jew, who was connected with the great houses in the principal capitals, and was

acknowledged as standing at the head of his profession. This man, on being introduced to a view of the gems in Avenil's rooms, was so astounded that he sank back in his seat and looked wistfully at the trustees. Recovering himself, he enquired if he might be made acquainted with the history of the jewels, and the mode in which they had come into the present holder's hands.

Bertie contented himself with saying that they were heirlooms in the family of the ward of whom he and his two friends were trustees. Finding that nothing more was forthcoming, the merchant said—

“Diamonds like these are always catalogued. No two famous stones have precisely the same weight or form, and few have precisely the same hue. Here is a printed list of all the principal diamonds in the world, including those which have disappeared; for such things are never destroyed. They are always kept out of the way of fire, but they disappear through being stolen and hidden away, and the thieves dying and leaving no note. I propose, with your per-

mission, to weigh some of these larger ones, and compare them with my list."

He then produced a balance of a marvellously delicate construction, and having ascertained the exact weight and counted the sides of a wonderfully magnificent diamond, he referred to his book. What he found there made him start again. He said nothing, however, but proceeded with tremulous hand to make a like comparison with some of the others. After referring to another part of his book, he addressed the trustees and said—

"Gentlemen, when you have heard what I am about to say, you will not wonder at my surprise, and, I trust, not be averse to giving me the information I have already requested of you. The last time that these gems were seen in public, it was in the capacity of crown jewels of the brilliant but short-lived empire of the North Pacific. You are doubtless all familiar with the extraordinary career of the Californian sailor-warrior, who maintained the independence of the states of North America which border on

the Pacific, against those on the east of the Rocky Mountains, and erected them into an empire unrivalled in grandeur and extent, bringing all the islands of that great ocean with their enormous wealth of produce, beneath his sway; and who was finally baffled in his scheme of universal dominion in that hemisphere, by the determined and heroic resistance of the allied powers of Australia and New Zealand. Ah, gentlemen, those were exciting times in that hemisphere. Then, for the first time since the days sung by Moses, Homer, and Milton, earth, sea, and air bore an equal share in the contests of men. The lofty ranges of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada witnessed many a terrible struggle between the armies of the eastern and western powers of the continent. The Pacific swarmed with war-ships swifter and mightier than any before imagined. And ever and anon in the upper regions of the atmosphere, occurred dreadful conflicts between the aerial armies of the rival powers; while here and there on the lovely but lonely isles of the great ocean,

would drop down a detachment of invincible warriors, and in the name of one or the other of the contending parties reduce them to submission and tribute.

“Forgive my repeating what every school-boy knows, and the oldest of us can almost remember; but professional enthusiasm has invested that period with an overpowering interest for me; for never before or since have gems attained such a value as under that brilliant and reckless ruler. It was on the downfall of the adventurer, for so I suppose I must call him, seeing that he did not succeed in establishing his kingdom, that these gems were lost. His end was as strange as his origin and career.

“Born in a Californian placer, and carrying in his veins the blood of that long famous heroic family of France, the Bonapartes, and of the renowned high priest of the once powerful sect of the Mormons, King George-Francis, on the collapse of his empire, quitted his capital, San Francisco, in an aeromotive. His hope was to reach the Sandwich Islands, the chief depôt and head-quarters of his fleet.

Once there, he could for a long time defy the concentrated forces of his foes, and enjoy the luxuries of the voluptuous court he was accustomed to hold there. His flight was at once known to his enemies, who were assembled on the coast of California, and an aerial squadron started in pursuit. The distance being but two thousand miles, there was no time to be lost if he was to be overtaken on the way. He was known to be heavily laden, and to have his chief valuables with him ; and he was accompanied by his minister of finance, a man of Oriental extraction, who had extraordinary influence over the emperor, and over whom hung some mystery. Many believed him to be a Jew.

“ His pursuers reckoned on their superior speed to reach the islands first unperceived, and capture him on his arrival before he could land. Fixing their rendezvous for the summit of Mouna Roa, they got there in time to conceal themselves in the hollows of an extinct crater, and take up their posts of observation. Heavily laden though they knew the car of the fugitive to be, its ma-

chinery was so powerful that they had no reason to suppose he would depart from his usual custom of flying high until directly over his intended destination, and then dropping straight down upon it. Their plan was to intercept him at the moment of his descent, and its success depended mainly upon his being unaided by his partisans in the islands. Had he telegraphed to them of his coming, a detachment of guards and officials would have risen to meet him, in too strong force to be withstood. The absence of any such demonstration led the party on the look-out to surmise that either through confidence, haste, or treachery, he had not announced his coming.

“They had not long to wait. In a very few hours a spot appeared in the northeastern horizon, which soon developed into the well-known outlines of the imperial car. Rising at once into the air, the enemy disposed themselves so as to be able to make sure of intercepting their prize. The comparative diminutiveness of their vessels would have rendered them unseen by him, while his

was plainly visible to them; moreover, the smoke which arose from the volcano beneath, the terrible Kilauea, then in a state of violent activity, would serve to make the whole scene on their side indistinct to one at a distance. Even when on his near approach the emperor perceived the hostile squadron, he had no reason to suppose it to be other than some of his own islanders, or other excursionists, on a visit to the renowned volcano.

“Too late he discovered that he was surrounded by enemies. The imperial car had been brought to a stand-still preparatory to its descent. They had considerable way on them, while he was motionless. This was the moment for which they had watched. They darted on him like a flock of swift eagles on an unwieldy swan. Seeing the capture of his vessel imminent, the Emperor, who was a man of unbounded intrepidity, committed himself to a parachute, in the use of which he was a tolerable adept; and presently his enemies, to their immense chagrin, saw him slipping through their hands, as he

descended, at first rapidly, and then, as the resistance of the air began to tell, slowly and steadily towards the earth.

“Now came the catastrophe which led to my telling this long story. During the struggle aloft, the contending parties had drifted immediately over the vast crater of Kilauea. Let me describe it, for I have seen it. No diamond merchant considers his education complete until he has made a pilgrimage to that fiery sarcophagus of so much beauty and wealth.

“Ascending the mountain, and traversing the table-land, you come suddenly to the brink of a gulf at least a mile in diameter, and with vertical sides from one to two thousand feet deep. The whole interior of this abyss is a furnace of molten lava, agitated like the ocean in a tempest, and tossing aloft billows of fire, which do not, as in the ocean, flow in one direction, impelled by a steady wind, but meet from opposite quarters with such violence as to dash their fiery spray high in the air. And all this fierce contention goes on amid such appalling sounds of rage

and sighs, and groans and murmurs, that it is impossible to avoid fancying one is gazing upon the fabled hell of the poets, and watching the throes of giant fiends in their agony.

“How the Emperor came to meet his fate none could tell. Probably the mephitic vapours stifled his senses, and made him unable to direct his course. But he was seen to descend into the very midst of this furnace, and with him went the finest collection of diamonds in the world. There can be no doubt of it. They had disappeared from the Palace at San Francisco. They were not found in the captured balloon; and they have not been heard of since. I ought to mention, if only for the credit of my own countryman, that an heroic attempt was made to save him. His Chancellor of the Exchequer seeing his danger, made a dash at him on another parachute, and actually succeeded in overtaking and grappling with him for several moments. But he was forced at last to let him go, and with difficulty saved himself.

“And now, pardon me if once more I ask how these jewels which, a couple of genera-

tions ago, were thus lost in the crater of Kilauea, have returned into existence in the hands of their present owner? If I am exceeding discretion in making the inquiry, I apologise and withdraw it."

All looked to Bertie Greathead. He had resolved to keep the matter secret, at least for the present. He felt the temptation strong upon him to reply—

"Lost in a crater of fire, they were found in a crater of ice!"

But he resisted it, and observed merely that it was probably a case of mistaken identity.

The merchant shook his head, and looked disappointed. But he only said,—

"In that case the previous history of the lost jewels can have no interest for you. Now what do you want done with these? I may be able to find you a purchaser, but I can undertake no responsibility about title."

"Of course not," said Mr. Avenil, somewhat sharply; "that is our business. All you have to do is to describe them as heir-looms in a family that wishes to realise their value.

And it occurs to me, that as we are disposing of the property of a minor, it will be well to make a condition providing for their re-purchase at his option on the occasion of his attaining his majority."

The merchant declared that such a condition was without a precedent, but that he would do his best. He had at that very time a commission to provide a set of diamonds to be worn at the coronation of the Emperor of Central Africa, a ceremonial which had been long deferred, owing to the loss of the crown jewels of that country, and the failure to procure any worthy to replace them.

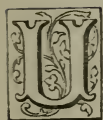
Not to multiply details, I will only add that a sale of the jewels was effected in the manner proposed, the eagerness of the African monarch to obtain them at any price the moment he received his agent's report, leading him to consent to the unusual proviso for their future redemption, rather than forego their present possession.

It was highly improbable that any private individual would care to keep such an amount as that of the purchase-money lying idle in

the shape of jewels, but the trustees were agreed as to the propriety of retaining the option, and the method they adopted of investing the fortune accruing from the sale would enable its possessor on coming of age easily to re-purchase them. For it was carefully placed in good governmental and co-operative securities, to average the moderate rate of ten per cent., the income being re-invested as it came in, so as to allow the capital to accumulate by compound interest.

Bertie was unwilling to accept any portion of the child's income towards its maintenance and education. But he was over-ruled by Mr. Avenil, who said that the immensity of the fortune would give his scruples about such a trifle the appearance of affectation, and also that it would be unfair to the boy himself to restrict his advantages to suit the far narrower means of any of themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.



UNDER the loving guardianship of Bertie Greathead, little Criss Carol thrived wondrously. Mr. Avenil and Mr. Wilmer knew well that they were doing the best for the child's highest welfare in committing it to such superintendence. They knew that the hardness and irresponsibility of character likely to be engendered by the possession of ample wealth would find its best corrective in the companionship of one so simple, tender, and true as Bertie the aeronaut. Whatever intellectual supervision was needed, Avenil would himself supply, but he agreed fully with Mr. Wilmer in ranking character as above attainments, especially for one ex-

empted by fortune from the struggle for existence, and endowed with an almost unlimited power of influencing others.

The struggle for existence! I shall not, I trust, be neglecting my story for my reflections, if I make here some observations respecting the origin and development of the period which produced the character I have undertaken to present. We are, each one of us, the product, not of the present only, but of the past. Nature, though it repudiates the vicarious principle, links all things together in an inevitable sequence. It is to the ever-memorable nineteenth century—a period to which we trace the first dawning of our glorious Emancipation—that we are indebted for the clue whereby we have escaped entanglement in those labyrinths of transcendental speculation, in which our forefathers lost themselves.

How would they have rejoiced could they have seen in their day the revelation of the divine method of the universe which has been made to us!—could they have known that in the original substance which filled infinity was

such capacity for evolution as would account for all subsequent phenomena whatever ; that the various steps of physical motion, heat, life, light, sensation, thought, conscience, follow each other necessarily, evolved, as the spark from the contact of steel with flint, from the contact of part with part,—given only time, or rather eternity, for the process ! and this not over the infinite whole merely, but throughout each separate portion.

It was the struggle for existence,—a struggle often, doubtless, in those who are too weak to endure to the end, fatal to that Conscience, which alone we recognise as worthy to be the final cause of all things—that at length produced the conscience which now governs the world,—at least, in its maturer parts,—and constitutes the salt of its preservation. Read by this light, history exhibits nation after nation, race after race, Aryan, Turanian, Semitic, all faltering and failing, tried and found wanting, through lack of capacity for development up to this the crowning point of the structure of humanity. No

single race was equal to the achievement. And so it comes that now the first place on the earth is held by the peoples into whose composition enters something of each of these, but most of the Aryan, and that under its Anglo-Teutonic form, this being pre-eminently the race which acknowledges the supremacy of man's brain and heart, and ranks the intellect, the moral sense, and the affections of living humanity, as above all traditions and conventions whatsoever.

Such was the significance of "the glorious Emancipation."

Young Christmas Carol was fortunate alike in the period of his existence, and in the persons among whom he fell. Had he, with his beauty, his wealth, and his mystery, lighted upon our isles in the days when Money was king and Conventionality was god, the story of his life could scarcely have been other than a tale of the degradation and ruin of a character, of his essential innermost sacrificed to his accidental outermost, to the utter effacement of the divine capacities of

his being as an individual. But he came in a time when the dominant characteristics and achievements of modern society were such as found fair representatives in men like those who became his friends and guardians. Greathead, Wilmer, and Avenil, each was an exponent of a different yet co-ordinate factor in the sum of triune perfection. With Goodness, Beauty, and Use thus impersonated, to preside over his youth, Christmas Carol had all the external advantages that the world even of these our days could bestow.

I assign the function of representing Beauty in the above-mentioned category, to my grandfather and father, each of whom in turn were the lad's trustees and guardians : for the same exquisite spirit of poesy animated them both, and their influence had much to do with the nurture of the lad's nature on its softer side. Would that death had not so early removed my father. Yet even Criss's ample repayment to me would not have exceeded his indebtedness to him. I believe my father's chief regret in dying arose from his desire to carry on to comple-

tion the education of which he had helped to lay the foundation.

Physically and mentally little Criss Carol exhibited the characteristics of his ancestry. The Greek came out in his keen appreciation of knowledge and beauty : the Semitic showed itself in his sensitiveness to the imaginative and emotional. Never was prophet-poet of the ancient Hebrews possessed by a more vivid sense of a divine personality. Soar far aloft with him as Bertie would on his voyages while yet a child ; or afterwards when as a lad he had become an adept unsurpassed in the management of his beloved " Ariel," and mounted by himself to regions of air inaccessible to others, even the most daring, his foster-father owned himself startled at the boy's absolute inability to comprehend the feeling of loneliness. Sometimes he seemed as if he held commune with beings palpable only to himself. But Bertie, while he watched and wondered, respected the individuality of the child's manifest genius, and therefore abstained from any remark that might chill

his spirit, and throw him back upon himself.

When permitted to make ascents by himself it was Criss's delight to shoot rapidly up to a great height, and there remain almost stationary, like an eagle poised on outspread wings, without help from his propelling apparatus. Here he could long remain floating about on his parachute. The perfection which he soon attained in the use of this appliance was so great as to relieve Bertie of any misapprehension on the score of accident. His parachute was one of the flat kind, so difficult to master, but so admirable in its action when mastered. It would almost float on the air by itself when expanded; and Criss, who was slenderly built, of moderate stature, and a wonderfully active and wiry frame, was able by its aid alone to raise himself from the ground and remain in the air for a considerable time. Indeed to fly, seemed to be almost as instinctive with him as with the birds; and it was one of the prettiest sights to see him, quietly and without

apparent effort, soaring aloft in the clear blue, sustained by the white expanded wings of his parachute, with a crowd of birds flocking round him, and seeming to recognise him as of their own order.

As he grew up he was allowed to have for his own a rocket-spiral machine of the most perfect make that the skill of Avenil could devise and his own fortune purchase. This was worked by the power long ago discovered, but for the secret of whose practical application our ancestors for generations sighed and toiled. Their mistake consisted, not in their conception of the potentialities of the magnetic coil, but in supposing that the power produced was only in proportion to the amount of the chemical and metallic elements consumed. It was the discovery that these agents are but a necessary initiative, and that the power is capable of almost indefinite enlargement without a corresponding increase in their consumption, but merely by bringing other and more subtle elements into co-operation, that has made possible all our modern mechanical developments.

So naturally did Criss take to flying, that it needed no laborious instilment of the formulæ respecting the relations of atmospheric pressure to falling bodies, to produce the confidence indispensable to the exercise of the art. The ancient hymn, "Heaven is my home," had for him from the first a peculiar and literal significance.

Bertie was long profoundly affected by the loss of the wife he had so curiously acquired ; and partly under the influence of this feeling, partly for the sake of a more bracing air for Criss, he removed his head-quarters from The Triangle to a cottage on the Surrey hills, situated near the new town which was then rapidly springing up. It was here, where, except on one side, there was scarce a tree or impediment for miles, that Criss made his first essays, and acquired his chief skill in aerostation and aeronautics. Had Alma lived, and their home continued to be in the city, it would scarcely have been possible for Criss to become what he was ; and had his lot fallen in a wooded country, it would have been

scarcely more possible. We have here an illustration of the apparent fortuity of the events which dictate fate. An open down, and a convenient starting point in the shape of an old chalk quarry, from whose brink he could take his first flights, were the leading agents in the formation of his career.

His skill once acquired in the country, its exercise was not interfered with by a return to town. Every house-top afforded him a resting-place, and it was one of his chief amusements to pass, sustained by his parachute alone, from one street to another, without ever descending lower than the roofs, but merely touching them lightly in order to spring from them onwards.

We in our days are so accustomed to things as we have them, that we are apt to forget they were not always so. There was a time when the roofs of their houses were as strange and mysterious to the inmates, as the interior of the earth on which they stood. But the practice of aeromotion, and the substitution of magnetism for coal in the production of heat,

combined to bring about a great revolution in our architecture and habits, and affected even our system of jurisprudence. For it was found necessary, in the interests of that privacy which is essential to the development of the character and affections, to secure our interiors from the observation of impertinent aerialists, by making certain changes in our window system, and also to add certain stringent provisions to the laws relating to libel and slander. The most effective of these provisions was one that was in direct opposition to the enactment of our ancestors. There was a period when they suffered the libeller to go free on pleading justification and sustaining his plea by proof of its truth. We, on the contrary, treat such a plea as an aggravation of the original offence, and punish it accordingly.

But what would our ancestors have said, could they have seen the London of to-day, on a fine evening ! The growing scarcity of coal, once deplored by them as the commencement of Britain's decline and downfall, proved in reality its greatest blessing, through

the impulse it gave to scientific research and the discovery of substitutes. Not to dwell upon the mechanical and economical gains thus effected, I will mention only the gain in comfort and health. Who now that sees our flat and commodious roofs, with their friendly gatherings, and elegant adornments, can realise the time when for an aerialist to pass over a large town, at a moderate height, would have been to court destruction by suffocation! For then every house was a volcano, and every chimney a crater, in a state of perpetual eruption, vomiting forth fire and smoke that made the atmosphere lurid, and loaded it with darkness and poison. Now, the roofs of our houses are the favourite resort of invalids, where the freshest air and the quietest repose are to be found, and not a "London black," once so proverbial, comes to soil their garments. Instead of seeking pure air in the country, as people used to do, such is the perfection to which sanitary science has been brought in our time, that invalids leave the country to seek the purer air of the town. The abolition of coal-

gas for the purpose of lighting has much to do with this. So brilliant, now, are our towns at night, that in many a house little extra light is needed beyond that which comes from without. Many a pleasant acquaintance did Criss make in his town sallies over the roofs, and many a sick person learnt to watch eagerly for his bright look and cheerful converse.

Whether dwelling in town or country, the scholastic part of Criss's education was carried on with the utmost care, under the admirable National School system for which our country has now for a long time been noted. It was, indeed, a happy day for England, when her people determined to throw all public endowments of Church and School into one common fund, and apply it on a consistent and homogeneous system to the cultivation of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual faculties of the whole people, in a manner neither coldly secular nor harshly sectarian.

Of the steps whereby the country arrived at a solution of that once famous *Religious*

Difficulty, by which our unhappy ancestors suffered themselves to be rent and divided into hostile factions, to the utter destruction of all patriotic impulses ; and of the part played by that *Difficulty* in ultimately promoting the establishment of a uniform Canon of Reference, for the solution of all questions requiring to be solved, I may have occasion, later on, to give some account. They form part of the larger history of the great movement which we know as "The Emancipation," a movement which constituted the crown and completion of the still more ancient "Reformation." A great result often springs from a mean-looking germ. It was the cost of the original "School-board" system that led the overburdened ratepayers to look about for means of relief. These were ultimately found in the enormous and ill-applied resources of the National Church Establishment.

Under the perfect organisation of the National School system, Christmas Carol was able to take his place in the classes of whatever school chanced to be near him. Thus he could equally pursue his studies

when dwelling at "Ariel Cottage" with Bertie, or with his other friends in The Triangle. In his case, as is usual now-a-days for the youth of all classes, the school-life was combined with the home-life, both being universally regarded as essential to right education. For we have got rid of the old system, under which children were in childhood relegated to the care of illiterate and ill-bred domestics, and in youth banished for months together to establishments where their parents could exercise no supervision over their progress or associations.

We have got rid also of the system which recognised and fixed a broad distinction between classes. All now are taught in the same institutions ; the only differences being such as are rendered needful by the different vocations they are intended to follow.

Avenil, Bertie, and my grandfather, as well as their relations male and female, were educated in these schools. My father's premature death led to my being deprived of the same advantage, to my irreparable loss. The adoption of this system of united instruction

for all classes was accompanied by an access of patriotic enthusiasm, such as has rarely occurred in the history of our country. The class antagonisms and differences out of which had grown so many of our social difficulties, at once fell to a vanishing point.

England's rich and poor ceased to constitute two hostile nations. It is recorded that the education of the poor was never efficiently administered until the rich determined to avail themselves of the National Schools for their own children.

The mechanism of the system was contrived not merely to allow, but to encourage, the development of individual character and opinion on the part of the scholars. While inculcating *methods* rather than *results*, it trained each individual to refer all questions, neither to authority nor to tradition, but to the criterion of his own carefully cultivated intelligence and moral sense. To develop, not repress, the faculty of thinking, was now the object of education; and this with girls as well as boys! The inculcation of opinions based upon mere authority, and bearing no

relation to evidence or utility, was reckoned immoral.

The "Religious Difficulty" had been solved by the substitution of careful definitions for the old harassing dogmas. Church and School, representing severally the development of the religious and the intellectual faculties, were able to unite upon the basis of the axiom, that—

As in the region of *Morals* the *Divine Will* can never conflict with the *Moral law* ; so, in the region of *Physics*, the *Divine Will* can never conflict with the *Natural law*.

Whatever may have been the mental capacity of primitive man, it has been found that under its modern development the human mind is unable to conceive of universal law as proceeding from any source short of the *Divine*, that is, the supreme all-pervading creative energy of the *Universe*. And we find it to be equally impossible for us to regard as *Divine* a will or law that is variable and self-contradictory. So that, did we find a conflict occurring between *Law* and *Will*,

we should necessarily and involuntarily determine that one or the other was not entitled to be regarded as Divine.

This axiom or definition is not a "dogma," inasmuch as it does not claim to be true independently of reason and evidence. It is a necessary basis of consciousness. We cannot conceive of the opposite of it being true, any more than we can conceive of Space as limited, or Time as terminable.

The close and affectionate relations maintained between his fellow-guardians, secured for Criss all the advantages of a home and society whenever Bertie's avocation took him to a distance. Whether in the private dwelling and working rooms of the Avenils and Wilmers, or in the common salon of The Triangle, Criss was always warmly received as a favourite member of the coterie. Ofttimes, when left by himself in the cottage on the downs, to follow his studies in Bertie's absence, he would telegraph to his friends at The Triangle (for all the members have a private wire between

the club and their country houses,) telling them that he was coming to spend the evening with them, and asking them to have tea on the roof, when he would alight among them in his car.

The extent of the boy's wealth was kept a secret among his trustees, but his character and history made him a constant subject of interest, and his friends delighted to draw him out on matters which excited his attention. As affording a glimpse of his life at this time, as well as of those with whom he was connected, the following letter of the elder Mrs. Avenil to my grandmother will be read with interest—

“Criss was to join us a few evenings back on the roof of The Triangle, and as he was late, we looked out for him. Some of us thought we had caught sight of the Ariel's light over one of the poorest parts of the city, but it remained there so long that we concluded we were mistaken. When at length he dropped among us, he said in reply to our questionings, that he had lin-

gered in that neighbourhood as one that always had a special attraction for him. My son Charles exclaimed at this, and asked what he could want in the very worst part of London.

“The boy looked surprised and puzzled, and then said—

“‘Why *worst*? what do you mean by *worst*?’

“‘I mean,’ said Charles, ‘that it is inhabited by the poorest and most vicious classes.’

“‘Poor, yes; but what is *vicious*?’ asked the child.

“‘Now, Mr. Wilmer,’ said Charles, ‘here’s a chance for you.’

“‘Nay,’ replied Mr. Wilmer, ‘surely your twenty-seven years are competent to instruct his ten. Let us hear your definition.’

“‘I have not kept up my Morals since I left school,’ said Charles, ‘as I have been so much occupied with Mathematics; but if I remember aright, we used to define vice as a course of conduct produced by a defect in the faculty of sympathy, so that vice means

selfishness, or the practice of self-indulgence to the detriment of others.'

" 'If that be it, you have used the wrong word, Master Charles, dear,' cried little Criss with vivacity: 'for it is just because I find so much sympathy, and therefore so little selfishness or vice, among those poor people, that I delight to drop down among them.'

" 'But you hate squalor and ugliness, I know,' returned Charles, 'and admire every beautiful thing you see, in building and landscape.'

" 'Yes, yes, that is quite true,' pleaded the child, 'and I do not know quite how it is; but—' and here his voice sank and faltered a little, 'it always seems to me that directly something living and human appears, all my interest and sense of beauty centres in that. I never see the ugliness in those districts; for I see poor people helping each other in their struggles for a living. I see poor mothers tending their own children, instead of leaving them to servants, as some of the very rich do: and poor husbands and wives

nursing each other in sickness, instead of sending for a hospital nurse.'

" 'And pray, how do you see these things ?' asked Charles. 'I hope you don't go and look in at the windows ?'

" 'I don't know how I see them,' the child answered, thoughtfully. 'I seem to myself sometimes, when I am passing over a dwelling, to be as well aware of all that is going on inside as if I saw it with my bodily eyes. Perhaps it is by means of that same sympathy, the absence of which, you say, is the cause of vice.'

" Here I made a sign to Charles that he should not lead the child on to talk in this direction ; for we have often observed in him symptoms of a belief that he possesses some occult faculty, which makes him different in kind from other folk. A notion of this kind is often but a germ of insanity, and requires careful management to eradicate it, the most essential point being to supply plenty of occupation in another direction, and allow it to die of inanition by never encouraging or even heeding it. The sympathetic faculty

exists in him to an extent altogether extraordinary, and unless its growth be judiciously repressed, and kept proportionate to other sides of his nature, we shall have reason to be anxious about the excesses to which it will carry him when he comes into the very considerable fortune which I understand will be his. Bertie Greathead insists on his being kept in ignorance of his prospects while his education is going on. No doubt it would injure the character of any ordinary youth to be brought up to regard himself as independent of parents or guardians, for such sense of dependence plays an important part in the development of our best feelings. But Crissy is not as other children. The affections are already too predominant in him. He is capable of sacrificing himself to any extent. Their development needs precisely such a check as would be given by the knowledge of his own independence. It would give him a more practical turn. Admirably as he has learnt the theory and practice of aeronautics, there is in him far too great a predominance of the contemplative

and subjective element. It is true that when excited and eager in his talk, his wonderful eyes shine out upon his audience with startling brilliancy and suggestiveness. But when in repose, his gaze is manifestly turned inwards, as if *there* lay the real absorbing topic of his soul ; and he has a singular passion for being alone, a passion which grows upon him. Already his favourite reading is, not in the literature of our own day, but in such ancient writings as the Hebrew Psalms, and the Gospels, and the curious old English poem called ‘ In Memoriam.’ We who have learnt to discern the real significance of the Beautiful Life, cannot but feel uneasy at the proclivity thus shown towards sentimental contemplation by one so endowed and so young. All are not eagles to gaze with impunity upon the sun. I know there are some points upon which you and I do not coincide, but I shall be glad to know how your motherly heart judges this dear child and his bringing up.”

The district to which reference was made

in the conversation of which the foregoing letter records the commencement, is mainly inhabited by that large class of operatives, who are disqualified for being co-operatives. As all my home readers must be aware, the great mechanical trades and industries of the country are in the hands of large bodies of artisans, male or female, who are associated together for their own exclusive mutual benefit, except in the cases in which they are allied with outside capitalists. Much of the land is similarly held ; and the workers divide among themselves all the profit of their work, employing as managers and secretaries, men or women, of high education and social position, whom they pay liberally. The members of these associations and their families are all well to do, and run little risk of poverty from lack of work, while they have reduced the risk from natural causes to a minimum. For not merely have the members of the various trades, by breeding in and in among themselves, acquired an hereditary aptitude for their work, but they are careful to obtain the finest specimens of women to

be the mothers of their children, so that incapacity, mental or physical, is scarcely known among them. There is thus no longer a perpetual drafting off from these classes of the best looking girls to recruit the ranks of wealthy vice and dissipation, and no leaving to the working man only the poorest types of womanhood from which to choose his wife. It is therefore outside of the ranks of the co-operatives that the pinch of pauperism is found. To be qualified for membership, a man or woman must be up to a certain working power. Those who are above this standard are at liberty to remain aloof and work independently, making, if they can, larger wages than are to be got in the association, but at their own risk in case of illness or failure through other causes. Owing to the advantages in the shape of capital and machinery at the command of the associations, few do this except in those higher branches of art-labour, where individual genius finds scope for its exercise. The great bulk of the outsiders are excluded by reason of their inability to come up to the

mark required, as regards either the quality or the quantity of their work.

I mention this as I do not wish to appear to claim for our civilisation that it has already attained a condition so perfect as to be incompatible with the evil of pauperism. The principle followed by our artisan classes is still the principle inaugurated and insisted on by the church in bygone ages. As the church utterly disregarded human individuality in respect of the nature and operations of the mind, so the co-operative labour associations disregard it in respect of man's powers of physical work. The church doomed its heretics to dire condemnation here or hereafter. The co-operatives doom all artisans who are unable to comply with their arbitrary standard, to the dire pangs of poverty. The progress of enlightenment, by removing the shackles placed by the church upon thought, has emancipated mind from its slavery. A further progress will similarly enlarge the conditions of co-operative labour until all classes of workers can be included without the sacrifice of individual differences.

The old restricted church maintained its authority by force. The old trades-unions, adopting the ecclesiastical method, also used force. Like the church, too, they rejected the principle of nationality, and set up their caste against the state. These things are not so now. Individualism, or the rights of the man, had to struggle long and hard against the fanaticism of organisation, ecclesiastical or communistic. The helpless Celt had succumbed to the tyranny for ever, but for the indomitable energy of the self-reliant Anglo-Saxon, who taught him what freedom meant. Such advance have we made. But the end is not yet. The fold is not yet capacious enough to contain all the sheep. But time will accomplish even this. The curious part of it is that the artisans, even while following the old ecclesiastical principle in this respect, profess the greatest hatred of the old ecclesiastical régime. Such is the vitality of the system which dates from old Rome:—Rome that was for ever forcing its law upon men whether they would or not.

CHAPTER IX.

N their anxiety to do the very best for their charge, the scientific Avenils and the æsthetic Wilmers held many a consultation with Bertie Greathead. Under the term æsthetic I include the whole range of subjects which appeal to the emotions. It was to my grandmother's strong religious feeling that Mrs. Avenil alluded in the closing sentence of her letter. The family temperament, which in her and in my mother took the form of devotion, took in my father the poetic—and in myself the art—direction. My father had married his cousin, and after his death, which occurred in my childhood, my mother, under the influence of my grandmother, abandoned

herself utterly to the sway of their dominant sentiments. They withdrew altogether from their old associations, and buried themselves and me in the dwindling but tenacious sect of religionists, who, as representing the church prior to the Emancipation, assume to themselves the title of *The Remnant*. This, however, came after the time with which we are now concerned.

One day the conversation about Criss was commenced by Bertie referring to the boy's talk with his schoolfellows about the things he was in the habit of seeing and hearing when aloft in his car. Bertie confessed himself unable to determine whether his utterances respecting another world of intelligent beings proceeded from any fixed or definite conviction, but many of his schoolfellows thought that he believed in something akin to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and held the upper air to be inhabited by *angels*, who met and conversed with him.

"Does he think that he finds albumen and life-plasm up there?" asked the younger Avenil, with a laugh.

“ I understand that he calls them *angels*, but does not profess to know what they are made of,” said Bertie, dryly. “ He has sufficient scientific comprehension to avoid assuming a distinction in kind between the entities of matter and spirit. It was to a conversation he had with some of his schoolfellows on this point that I was about to refer in disproof of Mr. Avenil’s notion of his unpractical character.”

“ Surely the other boys ridicule him when he speaks to them of such things ?”

“ Far from it,” replied Bertie. “ They have too much reverence for the earnestness and simplicity of his character to let any irony appear. The only time he ever manifested impatience was at first, when they assumed as a matter of course, that he took for realities the products of his own imagination. On this occasion he told them that the beings of whom he spoke were as real to him as his own schoolfellows. They had been tending some pet animals, which Criss allowed some of his schoolfellows to keep in the cottage garden. One of the boys had

said that it would be a very dull and stupid world if all the living creatures had developed into human beings. And another said it would be duller still if all the human beings were grown-up men and women, without any boys or girls. And a third said that people used to fancy one yet more dull than that, for they imagined heaven as peopled with beings who were all alike, and had no difference even of sex. Then the first speaker turned suddenly to Criss, and exclaimed,—

“ ‘Carol can tell us all about it. Carol, are there any animals in heaven ?’

“ ‘You know our bargain,’ was his reply. ‘If you want me to tell you about the Above, you must first sing my favourite song for me.’

“ ‘Yes ! yes ! the balloon song ! the balloon song !’ cried a number of little ones, hastening to range themselves before him, as he seated himself on a grass-covered mound. And then the little voices burst with tremendous energy into the old nursery rhyme, which

dates from the days when men could mount into the air only by tying themselves to a huge bag of gas.*

* It may not be worth preserving for its own sake—what nursery rhyme is? But time is only too ready to drop things into oblivion; so here it is.

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
Go up and hunt the sky;
Then come and tell us soon
What you have found on high.

So many things we want to know,
We cannot see down here:
Where hides the sun when day is done,
Where goes the dried-up tear?
And when our laughter dies away,
Who stores it up for future day?

Balloon! Balloon! Balloon!
Tell us of what the stars are made,
What are their children like?
We're always told they're good as gold,
And never sulk or strike.
But ar'n't they often giddy found,
With always rolling round and round?

“ ‘ Now what is it you want to know ? ’ he asked, when they had finished.

“ ‘ If there are any animals in heaven.’

“ ‘ Certainly there are,’ he replied, with the utmost seriousness. ‘ One of the principal delights of the angels is in tenderly tending

Balloon ! Balloon ! Balloon !

What is it makes the thunder peal ?

Where are the old gods gone ?

We used to think ’twas they who drink

The clouds when rain is done.

But don’t you often quake with fright

So far from earth to be at night ?

Balloon ! Balloon ! Balloon !

We know what you have got to say,

You’ve told us oft before :

That if would we the old gods see,

We must our best adore :

And shines the sun, perpetual day,

’Tis only we who turn away.

Balloon ! Balloon ! Balloon !

Go up and hunt the sky ;

Then come and tell us soon

What you have found on high.

them. They regard them as the incipient intelligences of higher natures, and only a few steps below their own children.'

" 'And are there any baby angels?' inquired a little girl. She was sister of the lad who had spoken first, and listened with awe to his account of the Above.

" 'Certainly,' he said; 'why not? Would not this be a very poor world were there nothing but grown men and women in it, no tiresome children, no beautiful birds, no noble horses, no sleek cats, no dear affectionate dogs? Ah, they are not worse off up there than we are down here, you may be sure.'

" One of the older boys here asked him whether the beings he spoke of possess any specific gravity, or are altogether independent of gravitation.

" He replied that doubtless they vary from us in density and weight, as they live at so different an elevation in the atmosphere; and that in some respects they hold the same position towards us as fishes of the sea, inasmuch as they do not require a solid element to rest upon, and can sustain them-

selves at different elevations. They inhabit mainly, he said, the junction of the atmosphere with space, and breathe the pure ether of the latter : but are endowed with an apparatus whereby they can secrete the fluid necessary for breathing when they wish to descend into the atmosphere. He delighted, he said, to note the resemblances between things there and here.

“ One of the lads said he supposed that every one was much more perfect up there than in this world. To this Criss said :—

“ ‘ I do not understand. What do you mean by more perfect? All God’s worlds must be perfect.’

“ ‘ But not the people in them ?’ suggested one.

“ ‘ Hush, hush,’ exclaimed Criss, ‘ we cannot call anything imperfect unless we know the end it was designed to fulfil, and that it falls short of fulfilling that end.’

“ ‘ He talks as if they were all real for him,’ said another. ‘ Come, Carol, tell us, do you ever use the clouds as a bed, and go to sleep and dream when you are lying on them ?’

“ ‘ Oh, yes, often and often,’ he returned ; ‘ but these things are as real for me as you all are. Call them what you will, they are forces external to myself, and which make me conscious of their existence by operating upon my senses just as you yourselves do. Please do not call their existence into question. Fancy my having to try hard to persuade them of the existence of you my school-fellows ! It would seem just as absurd to me ; and they have too much sense to require it. Surely it is but a barren, superfluous sort of talk that consists in our questioning each other’s existence. We, too, who have the microscope, telescope, spectroscope, and such things, to make perpetual revelations to us of worlds otherwise invisible ! If it seems odd to you that I should have experiences which you have not, you should remember that you have experiences which I have not. The difference between us in this matter is only such as exists between a man who has an ear for music and one who has none, or one who has a keen eye for colours and one who is colour-blind. It is all a question of sensitiveness.’ ”

Here old Mrs. Wilmer interrupted Bertie's narration to remark that in saying this the boy did not do himself justice. He should have adduced the case of his own Israelitish ancestors as a proof that some races are endowed with a vividness of spiritual perception which others are incapable of comprehending.

"I myself heard him," said my father, joining in the conversation, "soon after the trip he made with us to the seaside, describing to a group of little children some of the games and recreations with which, he said, the angels amuse their leisure hours. You would have thought he was actually gazing upon the scenery of the ideal world, as he described the particulars, so well did he make his audience realise it too. Had I been a painter I could have drawn a picture from his description, so vivid and graphic was it. There were rows above rows of angelic beings, attired in colours undreamt of by our rainbows, ranged along the sides of tall cliffs which, in the form of a vast amphitheatre, overhung an expanse of ether which lay at

their feet, and stretched out and melted away in the distance like an illimitable sea. I thought at first he was going to describe something like the scene at Lord's at one of the cricket-contests between our ancient national schools of Harrow and Eton, where the rows upon rows of exquisitely-dressed women ranged round the ground, resemble a circular embankment of beautiful flowers. But he went on to describe this expanse as being of various hues, streaked in some parts with tints of tender blue, and ruffled as if with a light breeze, and in others white and glassy, or of a delicate green, and the whole scene wondrously beautiful even to the eyes of the angelic multitude. But it was not to gaze on a scene of still life that the celestial hosts were thus assembled. Some of the younger angels had been busying themselves in fabricating a number of vessels of various characters and forms, and they and their friends had met to witness a contest of speed between them. Some of those vessels contained ingeniously-devised machinery concealed within them. Others were provided

with wide-expanding wings to catch the pulsations of the surrounding ether. And others were impelled by the young angels themselves ranged in ranks upon them, and impelling them by their own physical strength. And now and then during the race would be seen some little craft without visible means of propulsion, making such rapid way as to outstrip all competitors ; and then a shout would arise, as the spectators surmised that something unfair was being done ; and then from beneath the keel which was hidden in the element, the owner would emerge, shaking the ethereal particles from his wings, and making the welkin ripple to his merry laughter, for such method of propulsion was not within the conditions of the contest. I could have gazed long upon the enchanting scene, as he raised it before me ; but the bright and happy crowds of the celestial population, and the fairy forms darting over the luminous expanse, were in a moment all dispelled ; for one of the youngsters suddenly broke the rapt silence with which we had been listening, by clapping his hands and

exclaiming, 'I know! Yachts!' And after this Criss would not utter a syllable further."

It was with considerable impatience that the Avenils had listened to these recitals of Bertie and Wilmer. When they were concluded, Mr. Avenil said to my father—

"We must turn him over to you, Wilmer, to make a poet of him. He will grow up a dreamy and unpractical man, and utterly unable to turn his fortune to good account."

"I think," pleaded Bertie, "the skill he has acquired as an aerialist, indicates a sufficiently practical turn for all useful purposes."

"You aeronauts," returned Mr. Avenil, "are too apt to judge the affairs of earth by those of the air. You know little of anything more substantial than the currents of wind and differences of atmospheric density and temperatures. Yours is a pursuit that generates a disposition to drift rather than to act."

Bertie laughed heartily at the idea of depreciating his vocation upon moral grounds; and remarked that those who know what it

is to drive an aeromotive at the rate of a hundred and fifty miles or more an hour, through mist and darkness and tempest, cleaving the ice-cloud, and dodging the lightning, would hardly recognise the criticism as founded in justice. He added, that he, too, should be glad to see the boy in training for some definite career.

"A rich man," remarked Mr. Avenil, "ought to find his occupation in the employment of his wealth. An income derived from investments, which require no care on the part of the owner, tends to make a man a mere desultory vagabond, unless he have some strong bias of his own to direct him. I should like to see young Carol, as the proprietor of a large landed estate, devoting his money to the improvement of agriculture, by the application of science in all its available branches."

"You read Poet in his every word and expression," said Wilmer, "and would turn the Poet into a Farmer!"

"He certainly is an enthusiast," said the younger Avenil, "but his enthusiasm takes

anything but an analytic turn. His marvelous aptitude for languages, coupled with his locomotive propensities, convinces me that he will find his chief engrossments among men rather than among things."

There was good ground for Charles's remark. Criss had availed himself of the advantages afforded in the National Schools, to attain a facility of expression in many languages, which enabled him to converse freely with the nations of the various countries he had visited with Bertie; particularly the Arabic, which, for his origin's sake, Bertie had urged upon him. Bertie said that the boy seemed to acquire them almost by sheer force of sympathy. It was a heart—not a head—faculty. The possession of it would be sure to encourage his love of travel.

My father suggested that it was only part of the larger faculty of expression. The boy possessed language and insight. Travel would give him information and ideas. He ought then to turn his leisure to account as an author.

The elder Avenil demurred to this.

“The world and science,” he said, “are the same everywhere ; so that time spent in travel is for the most part time wasted. Accustom him to regard a piece of land as his own,—no matter whether he cultivates it or builds a town upon it,—and he will soon learn to love it, and devote himself to its improvement.”

“The boy is a bird—a bird of passage ; and you would chain him to a clod !” exclaimed Bertie.

“The boy is an Israelite and a poet, and may be a prophet,” said my grandmother, of hieropathic tendencies. “You are all thinking of the material, and forgetting the spiritual. Put him, with all his endowments of soul and body, into the land of his forefathers, and who knows but that he may successfully devote himself to reviving the ancient glories of his race, so long overshadowed by its lust for gold. Though restored to the Holy Land, Israel has yet to be restored to the Divine favour. You may deem me superstitious, but there is something in his connection with those jewels, as well as in himself, that to me be-

speaks him of royal destiny. You were quite right to make him learn Arabic, Bertie."

They were all struck by this remark, coming as it did from one who dwelt apart from the world of the present, in a region of exalted sentiment, absorbed in theological studies, and making her chief companions the Sacred books of the ancient religions. Unobservant, however, and indifferent, as she was in regard to things around her, there was one portion of the earth that was ever present to her mind, with an overwhelming interest. It was Judæa, the ever-memorable *Holy Land*. In much the same way, as the religious system once known as *Romanism* was long kept alive by its offspring and supplanter *Protestantism*, so was Judaism kept alive by Christianity long after it would otherwise have perished by natural decay.

The prophecies of the ancient Jewish patriot poets respecting the future resuscitation of their country's greatness had taken deep hold of old Mrs. Wilmer's mind, and she had viewed with exultation the return of the Jews to Palestine, and the vast influx of

wealth and power with them into that country, under the commercial influences of the Suez Canal, the Euphrates railroads, and the constitution of the Empire of Soudan or Central Africa.

The whole of the circumstances attending the restoration were unusual. The financial embarrassments of the decayed Moslem Empire had led to the sale of Palestine to a company of Jewish capitalists. The purchasers had little difficulty in acting upon the patriotism and commercial eagerness of their people, and inducing large numbers of wealthy houses to migrate thither, or at least to establish branch houses in the capital. The barren places in the surrounding districts were replenished with rich earth brought by sea from the Egyptian Delta, or the Tufa beds of Vesuvius and Etna, and liberally spread on the terraced hills of the new Jerusalem; and the whole desert tract of the lower Jordan and Dead Sea was filled with water up to the level of the Mediterranean, and made navigable, by a canal cut through the sandy wilderness from El Arish.

The Ancient Court of the Sanhedrim was re-established, but on a purely secular basis, as the nature of the times dictated. By this were the home affairs of the country regulated; its foreign relations being controlled by a committee of the Jerusalem Stock-Exchange, a puissant institution in these days of the almost universal supremacy of wealth.

Powerful and prosperous as the Jewish community in Palestine had become, it wanted yet one thing to complete its ambition. The adjoining countries of Arabia and Syria were willing to withdraw altogether from their allegiance to the Sultan, and unite as one people with the Jews, but they could not abandon their allegiance to the principle of personal government. The expulsion of the Sublime Porte from Constantinople, and its withdrawal from the Golden Gate of the Holy City, had utterly destroyed its prestige with these populations. But these events were themselves the result of causes which are easily traceable to a period so far back as the twentieth or even the nineteenth century. It was then, that the vivacious, brilliant, and long domi-

nant Celtic race had finally succumbed to the patient, thorough, and conscientious Teuton. It was then that the silent, studious German, backed by the moral force of our own Anglo-Saxons at home and in North America, laid the first round of the political edifice of that modern civilisation, whose subsequent stages have included the absorption by Germany of Austria proper; the reconstitution of the Slavonic confederacy, and consequent reduction of Russia within moderate dimensions by the withdrawal of her southern populations; the re-establishment of the "Holy Roman Empire," with Hungary as a royal appanage, in its own ancient capital on the Bosphorus; and the waning of the Turkish dominion, through its inability to retain its hold upon its border provinces.

My elder readers, who have all history, ancient and modern, at their finger-ends, must forgive the recapitulation of these details as not irrelevant to our story.

There was no king in Israel; and a king of Israel was the "roc's egg" of my grandmother's imagination. In such a potentate

she saw the sole possible supplanter of the Grand Turk, whom she regarded as the Anti-Christ, the sole symbol of empire powerful enough to draw the peoples surrounding her beloved Jerusalem under the shelter of its wings. And it is not a little remarkable, that what with her was purely a religious sentiment, had become, for astute politicians, a master-key to the solution of the principal remaining Eastern Question. As I have already stated, the populations of those countries retain all their ancient immemorial attachment to the personal principle both in religion and politics. They have not followed the northern races in their recognition of abstract right and wrong apart from the will of an individual. With us, wherever an individual is invested with power, it is for the sake of concentrating vigour and responsibility in a single executive ; ourselves, the people, being the beneficiaries and judges. With the semi-Semitic races, on the contrary, the ruler is the master, not the servant, of the people. We have long passed the stage in which people held strong convictions respect-

ing mere forms of government. Together with other dogmas we have got rid of the dogma of monarchy and the dogma of republicanism. Whatever form of government best combines the liberty of the individual with the general security for any people, is approved of by us. As the genius of races and peoples varies, so will these forms vary. The detail must be a matter of experience for all, not of dogma for any.

We have, thus, learnt to recognise the sanctity of Individuality in Races, as well as in persons. And there was no inconsistency in the statesmen of the great and highly-civilised republics of Europe, America, and Australia desiring to see a monarchy established in the East, having its throne in Jerusalem. The fact that such a result was desired by the leading Jews themselves, who were on the spot, was deemed a very strong argument in its favour ; for, trained as they had mostly been, in our free communities and institutions, they were naturally favourable to a continuance of the state of things under which they had flourished, and grown rich enough to re-

acquire the land of their forefathers, and raise it to such an eminence among the nations of the earth as it had never before attained or imagined—an eminence based on material wealth. Without a king, however, they were unable to avail themselves of the readiness of the populations inhabiting the regions extending southwards from the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, to make one nation with them ; for those populations were essentially and intensely anti - democratic. With a king, this object so desirable to us as well as to them, would at once have been accomplished ; and we should have had a strong and friendly power to guard our main connections with our allies in India and Japan, and our dependencies in China, on the one side ; and on the other, to keep in order the restless and still semi-barbarous empire of Central Africa.

So they were all struck by Mrs. Wilmer's remark. But it was not in the same way that they were struck by it. To Bertie it was simply preposterous.

“ My little Criss a king ! ” he exclaimed.

"I am sure that it is no kingdom of this world that he would care to have, any more than a farm. His heart is above the clouds."

"He cannot spend his money there," said Mr. Avenil.

"By the way, have you ever, Mr. Great-head, taken him to the Holy Land in any of your voyages?" asked Mrs. Wilmer.

"Once only," returned Bertie, "and then I was so alarmed at the attention his looks attracted, and also at meeting the diamond merchant, that I hurried away without completing the enquiries I was making about his family. I hardly know why, but I have a suspicion that that merchant knew more about the real history of those jewels than he was willing to tell us, and I thought it best to leave well alone. Did I ever tell you that I have seen them since we parted with them?"

"Indeed!"

"It was on the occasion of my going to Bornou, the capital of Central Africa, on a commission connected with the cotton trade,

that I was invited to witness a religious ceremonial at the court of His Majesty the Emperor of Soudan. You must know that though the country professes Christianity, the royal family have never abandoned the rite of circumcision. This is inflicted on its members in infancy, the rite of baptism being deferred until the seventh year. The ordinary and orthodox usage on the former occasion, is to bind the principal crown diamonds on the pit of the royal infant's stomach, there to be worn for nine days. The jewels in question are regarded with a peculiar and superstitious reverence, as coming directly from King Solomon, and they are combined in an oval form as a tiara, and called the Talisman of Solomon. But the crown jewels had for several years been missing, and were not forthcoming on the occasion of the first rite being performed on the heir-apparent. It was said that they had recently been recovered, and there were great public rejoicings in consequence: for the people are still excessively superstitious, in spite of their having Christianity and the

Bible. And it was determined to rectify the omission at the first ceremony, by using them at the baptism in the same way that they ought to have been used at the circumcision.

"Well, I found that this famous and sacred Talisman of Solomon consisted of no other than the jewels belonging to Criss, and which we had sold for him."

"Curious," observed Mr. Avenil; "I wonder whether it was a lie of the Emperor's, or whether they were really the crown jewels which we had. If so, they must have been stolen."

"At any rate," said Bertie, "the Emperor's readiness to give a large sum of money for their recovery, without asking any questions, shows that he had strong misgivings respecting the validity of his own title to them."

"I don't like one remark which you made, Mr. Greathead," said my grandmother. "Instead of saying these people are superstitious in spite of their having Christianity and the Bible, say they are religious owing to their having them."

“ I was anticipating a somewhat different remark from you, my dear Mrs. Wilmer,” said Mr. Avenil. “ I thought you were about to claim the throne of Central Africa, at least, for the lad. At any rate, I hope you all agree with me that this story must be kept from him. It would foster his propensity for dreaming, which to me is really alarming, and one that requires correction by vigorous treatment.”

“ He must know all when he comes of age,” said Mrs. Wilmer, with energy. “ His duty and mission in life may depend upon it.”

“ Well, well,” said Mr. Avenil, “ whatever the future may contain for him, it is clearly our business to make a man of him first, and not a visionary.”

CHAPTER X.

T was no small gratification to Bertie to be able to relate to the Avenils anything concerning his beloved foster-child that might tend to disabuse them of the notion that he was a mere visionary. One possessing Criss's acute sympathy with humanity could not, he thought, be liable to the charge, no matter how he might love to cultivate solitude and meditation in the intervals of his activity. During a holiday absence of the boy's, one of the Avenil girls was telling her sisters, how that he had lamented to her the fulness of the world, and wished that he had lived before the modern system of emigration had done so much towards spreading population every-

where. And another said he acted as if he possessed an extra sense, and one that required for its exercise a total withdrawal from human intercourse.

Bertie happened to call while they were talking, and they at once turned to him, asking—

“Where is he now, Mr. Greathead?”

“Meaning Criss? I scarcely know. I had a message from him a few days ago from the top of Teneriffe, which is one of his favourite perches. He has a friend in the observatory there. There is a wire on the summit, as on most other summits, for the convenience of aerialists, and he generally sends me a message when he alights anywhere.”

“Oh, I know,” exclaimed one of the girls, “he delights to rest awhile on some high peak, and thence take flight into the air, and return again to it, as a lark to its nest, after being poised aloft. It was a happy inspiration of Mr. Wilmer’s which gave him his name, for never did name and nature more closely correspond. However dreamy he

may be, he must see many things by moving about so much, which other people miss. He ought to meet with adventures, too. Did he say whither he was going next?"

"Yes, to Algiers to visit a school friend who is son of the British minister there. I have not heard from him since, but I have brought you an Italian paper with an account of an extraordinary rescue of people from destruction by the eruption of Etna, which I, as an aerialist, find exceedingly interesting, and which I thought you might like to see."

"Anything about Criss in it?"

"It is only as I have said."

"Do tell us all about it."

"Well, you must know that for a very long time Etna had been so quiet that a large population had come gradually to settle upon its slopes, thinking the days of its activity were over. Last week, however, a tremendous eruption rent the mountain in various places, and there poured out torrents of lava, which, meeting below one of the most thickly peopled slopes, completely cut off the

escape of the inhabitants. The Italian Government sent its best aerialists to try and extricate them, but these after many and disastrous attempts to pass the barrier of intense heat, and alight exactly upon the very limited area available, were compelled to desist: and then from within the flaming circle, from the wretches doomed to be burnt or starved to death, and from their sympathising but helpless comrades without, went up a cry of agony, which, as you know, has rung through all the wires of the world, appealing for aid. I and others of my craft were on the point of starting to see what we could do, when a telegram came to say that the rescue had been effected. I have now got the details, and as I consider them a whole bunch of feathers in the cap of aerialism, I have come to glorify my calling and its professors among my friends.

“It appears that at the moment when despair was at its height, an aerialist whose approach had been unperceived, alighted in the terror-stricken crowd, and signified his readiness and ability to save them, one at a

time. The peasants, who are still as much a parcel of children as they were five or ten thousand years ago, rushed upon him, determined to be saved all at once. Seeing that their violence would be the destruction of himself and his machine, as well as of themselves also, he dexterously disengaged himself, and leaping aloft out of their reach, was lost to their view in the smoke of the burning mountain. On hearing their renewed wail of despair, he presently returned towards them, and hailing them, said he hoped now that they would do as they were told, and not attempt to get into the car again. He then stopped a few yards over their heads, and bade them depute one of their number to hold parley with him, the rest keeping at a distance. Luckily their padre was with them,—it is he who has given the account,—and it was under his influence that the stipulations of the aerialist were observed. The important question, who should go first, was settled in favour of the children. The aerialist said he could carry two of these at once ; so the padre brought

two children himself, and placed them in the car, for he could not trust the mothers to obey the orders given. He describes it as a moment of agonising anxiety when the car arose with its first load, and disappeared in the smoke. But not a voice ventured to utter a sound. Presently, however, there arose from the multitudes who were assembled on the outside of the ring of fire, a cry and a shout of joy which told those within of the safe and unexpected arrival of the car and its contents. All was delirious delight for a moment, and then came an interval of suspense. But soon the car returned and carried off more children; and then the aged and infirm, and then the able-bodied, the good padre himself being reserved for the last, the lava having by this time approached so near that a little delay would have rendered his escape impossible. The rescue had occupied all the day and a part of the night, though much time had been saved by the plan of suspending a large basket beneath the car in which the passengers were carried. But it was not, and could not be intermitted until completed,

though it must have tasked the endurance of the aerialist and the powers of his machine to the utmost."

"You haven't told us who he was," said Avenil, who had entered during the relation. "Was he an Italian?"

"Ah, that is one of the strangest parts of the story," said Bertie. "When the people had done congratulating themselves and each other, they bethought themselves of their deliverer: but on searching for him he was nowhere to be found. The Government has advertised the thanks of the nation to the unknown aerialist, and offered to make any acknowledgment of his services in its power."

"Do you know any professional likely to have done it?"

"I know none who has an aeromotive corresponding with the description of this one; and it is not like a professional to think of concealing himself after doing a piece of business. I suspect it was some accomplished amateur, though I know of but one in the world capable of the feat."

"Could it have been Criss?"

"Here he comes to speak for himself," exclaimed one of the girls, who was looking out of the window. And presently the Ariel alighted on the broad verandah, and Criss entered.

But to all the questions with which they assailed him, he said only that he had hoped to escape being found out, and that the reason of his delay in returning was that he was so exhausted with the job that he had hurried off the moment he had let go the padre and the basket, and slept for twenty-four hours in a secluded nook on the opposite side of the mountain.

"Well, there is an Italian countship waiting for you whenever you choose to come out of your shell and claim it," said Bertie.

"Count Carol sounds charmingly," exclaimed the girls. "You may find it of immense use when you fall in love. A woman likes to be called *Countess*."

"Not a woman of much account, though, I suspect," returned Criss, making his first

and last joke, as he disappeared and went to his own room.

“There, girls,” said Avenil to his younger sisters after Criss was gone. “You see, a woman who wants to catch him will have to be on her best behaviour. By the way, has he ever shown any signs of falling in love, any preferences for any of your sweet sex?”

“Never,” said the youngest, Bessy Avenil, a blooming, practically-disposed damsel of nearly Criss’s own age, now about seventeen. “And I believe he would need a good shaking to bring him to the point; or, rather, that a woman would have to do the proposing herself. But I don’t believe it is ‘goodness’ that will win him; at least, not if opposites have the most attraction for each other.”

“At any rate he won’t find his duplicate,” said another, who was a little older. “My belief is that he will be better single, for he is just one to expect so much that he will always be disappointed with what he finds to be really the case. He seems to me like one

of those men who in old times women would have thought it a sacrilege to love."

"At any rate," added Avenil, "he has now proved himself to be something more than a visionary; so let us hope that this adventure will develop his practical side.

"Meaning his matrimonial?" asked Bessie.

"Do you know," said Bertie to Avenil, "that I think you carry your aversion to the contemplative to an extreme."

"Call it rather the unpractical speculative," replied Avenil. "The world's whole history down nearly to our own time has been little else than one long martyrdom, in which man has sacrificed himself at the altar of his own unverifiable fantasies. Ours is the first millennium of the Emancipation. It is the product of that scientific spirit, which refuses to divorce belief from knowledge. It is not that I find dear Criss's disposition aught but of the noblest, but that I fear the indulgence of that style of thought may lead to his sympathising rather with the world's ancient worst than with its modern best."

"You know a good deal about his educa-

tion," said Bertie;" have you found him defective in his views of history?"

"No, far from it. The professor of history at his school told me the boy's sympathies, as shown in his essays, were invariably of the widest and most radically catholic kind."

"And in chemistry, which you yourself undertook to teach him?"

"Ah, there is an illustration of what I mean. He applied himself to that with wonderful assiduity and success, making himself in a short time a complete master of chemical analysis. Then he suddenly dropped it; and on my enquiring the reason, said that it would not take him where he wanted to go, inasmuch as it failed to discover the universal entity that underlies all phenomena. It was not processes or stages that he cared for, but the ultimate analysis of things, whereby he could resolve the various material substances into their prime element. 'Is it past finding out, Avenil dear?' he cried, his eyes glistening with eagerness, as if his whole heart lay in discovering for himself what men call God.

Of course I told him that it is past finding out by chemistry.

“ ‘ But it must be there, and must be homogeneous !’ he cried, with the same eager manner. ‘ If it is not homogeneous, it is not God. I cannot think of God as made up of substances eternally and essentially different.’ And he went on to declare that if the crucible failed to carry analysis back to the stage where all things meet, and to reveal to him the universal Substance or essential spirit of things, he should exchange the crucible of the chemist for the crucible of his own mind, and continue the search there.

“ Considering it a perilous temperament that prompts the longing to merge one’s individuality in the inscrutable universal,—for what else is the Nirvana of the Bhuddist?—I endeavoured to check his indulgence of it by saying that as our faculties, being themselves phenomenal, cannot transcend phenomena, it is clearly our duty to rest content with phenomena, and not seek to trespass upon forbidden ground. He asked what the penalty is for making the attempt. I told him a

wasted life, fatuity, and ofttimes madness, as the history of the world amply showed. And I spoke seriously, as I wished to impress him with a sense of the danger he runs through indulging his theistic tendencies. But he laughed, and said with that winning way he has,—

“ ‘ Dear Master Avenil, if I were made so, no doubt I should be able to remain content with mere phenomena, without seeking to know what it is that appears in and through them. But I feel that I am not made so. Suppose me, then, to be a bit of the universe, a conscious particle of the great whole, would you have me balk my longing to recognise, and be recognised of, the whole of which I am a part? Nay, supposing the theory which you favour to be correct, and that it is only in our consciousness that the Universe attains self-consciousness, would you forbid Nature such crowning satisfaction as it may attain through my consciousness ?’

“ What could I say ? Bertie, what would you have said ?”

“ If the longing be genuine, fulfil your

nature, only do not cultivate fancy to the neglect of experience."

"Well, that is very much what I contrived to say, and the boy cried, 'Ah, that is just as my own dear wise Bertie would have spoken.'

"He added, too, that even if madness be the penalty for presuming to endeavour to penetrate the unfathomable, it was a penalty that was quite as likely to overtake him if he refused his nature full liberty of exploration. I suspect that his habits of physical discursiveness have something to do with this mental characteristic."

"You know his favourite motto, which he inscribes in his most private entries?" asked Bertie.

"No, what is it?"

"A text from Scripture, 'One with God.'"

Avenil sighed, for he really loved the lad.

CHAPTER XI.

HE women of the Avenil family, both for their connection with Criss, and as types of a dominant class, deserve a special chapter to themselves. Although by describing our recent social developments and the steps whereby our national church was brought into accord with them, I may delay my story, my readers must not think that I am digressing from the main purpose of my book. The connection may not be at once obvious, but neither in these fortunate days is the special connection obvious between the church and the female part of the community. It was not so in the times to which I shall have to recur in order to make my story, as a story

of the day should be, an index to the manners of the age.

I wish that it came within my scope fully to delineate the characters of old Mr. and Mrs. Avenil, who disappear from the scene about the time at which we have arrived. It is only permitted to me to say that they died as they had lived, contentedly resigned to the operation of the laws of that Nature which had ever been the subject of their deepest study. United, in harmony with the dictates of their consciences, in a marriage of the third class, and therefore trusting solely to their own sense of mutual fitness and sympathy for the continuance of their association, no cloud had ever intervened between them and the full sunshine of their happiness. Hand in hand they lived and loved and worked, trusting to their respect for the physical laws of life to find its due issue in the development of their moral natures. So they passed through life cheerful, reliant, and self-sustaining, emulating in their own method the consummate ease and enchanting rhythm of the order of the uni-

verse ; keenly enjoying in their heyday the rewards reaped of knowledge and obedience, and, in their decline, still finding pleasure in tracing and recognising the inevitable sequence of the steps which marked their decay. To the very last, their delight in studying the phenomena of the present, made them indifferent to those of the past or future. Neither regret nor hope found a place in their minds. Wherever is existence, they said, we shall find something worthy to be studied. Whatever lasts as long as we do is sufficient for us. Anticipation serves only to spoil the actual. Anxiety about the future implies dissatisfaction with the present. Such was their religion, a term surely not misapplied, though devoid of that yearning towards a personified ideal which constitutes spirituality.

They left a large and distinguished family to inherit a temperament in which the intellectual faculties dominated to the exclusion of the spiritual. For they held it as an axiom that the spiritual faculty which has not the intellectual and moral for its basis—that is, which ignores evidence and utility—is apt to

be as pernicious as the imagination which ignores experience and fact. Of this family Mistress Susanna Avenil (to give her the usual designation of women living in such wedlock as she insisted on) was the eldest; Charles himself coming next; and the younger ones, whom I have termed the Avenil girls, bringing up the rear. There was thus a very considerable interval between the eldest and the youngest of the brothers and sisters.

Bright, intelligent, cheerful, and active, the sisters were a model of self-helpfulness and prudence. Though not devoid of sentiment in regard to the delicate matters of the affections, they were too practical in their management to let their affections minister to their discomfort. They had one and all asserted the privilege accorded to girls now-a-days, of quitting the parental shelter at the same age that their brothers quit it, in order, like them, to follow the vocations they have chosen.

No sickly exotics were they, such as their foremothers of ages long past. For them

was no herding together under the perpetual parental eye, like silly sheep sure to be lost if once they strayed ; no sacrificing the individuality of their genius or their characters, and passing their lives in worthless frivolity or listless indolence, envious of the active careers of their brothers, powerless to earn or to spend, and absolute slaves to the exigencies or caprices of their parents, until marriage should come to deliver them to a new bondage. The days happily are long past, in which, while to man all careers were open, to women there was but one, and it depended upon the will of individual men to accord them that. It is 'little wonder that, thus placed, the women of those times should have devoted themselves to the pursuit of marriage, with an eagerness commensurate with the uncertainty of success, and reckless whether the issue promised ill or well. Nor is it strange that, caring nothing for the characters of the men, but only for their wealth, the women should have so deteriorated in their own characters that the men ceased to care for them, except as companions

of the moment, and declined to ally themselves with them in any but the most temporary manner. The literature of the Victorian era, just preceding the Emancipation, abounds in evidences of the hapless condition of the British female of that period, particularly in the middle and upper classes. It was the very intensity of her despair of any amelioration of her condition by conventional remedies, that precipitated the radical change of which we are now so richly reaping the benefits. That this change was not effected long before, was owing, it must be confessed, to the timidity of the men, and their want of faith in the inherent goodness of the female heart. The men had suffered the women to retain their belief in ecclesiastical infallibility long after they themselves had abandoned such belief. The irrevocability of marriage, dictated as it was by priests, had at least the appearance of being a revenge taken by them for their own exclusion from it. It was the disastrous result of ecclesiastical restriction upon the relations of the sexes, far more than a process of rational investigation, that

opened the female mind to the baselessness of ecclesiastical pretensions. The men fought their own way to freedom by dint of hard brain-work. It was for them a battle royal between truth and falsehood, or rather between the right to obey the dictates of their own minds and consciences, and the claims of antiquated tradition. But they did not take their women with them. Either through difference of nature or difference of training, these were not amenable to the considerations which had influenced the men. Woman cared nothing for the abstract truth or falsehood of her religion. Her heart was the sole instrument whereby she judged such matters. The ordinance of the church which rigidly forbade all intercourse with the other sex, save on condition of an indissoluble life-long contract, had come to have the effect of abolishing even those very contracts. While those who were already involved in them, finding themselves unable to part, were driven more and more to desert. Woman had so far subordinated her intellect and moral sense to the authority of her priests, so far forgotten

her heart, as to accept at their hands a deity and a faith which were independent of any considerations recognisable by those faculties. Her new-born infant might be consigned to everlasting torture for the omission by its parents of a prescribed ecclesiastical ceremony ; but the system that kept her from getting a husband in this world was intolerable. And by insisting on the absolute permanence of the tie, the church had virtually abolished marriage.

That a great change was necessary and inevitable, was seen by both men and women long before the particular nature of the change could be forecast. The patience of the British people never received a more signal illustration. Desiring gradual amelioration, and not sharp revolution, generation after generation went on hoping against hope. But the evil continued to increase. The women flocked to their temples, and performed ardent devotions ; but they did not obtain husbands ; neither did they lose the desire for them. In those few generations, when the evil was at its worst, millions of fair, well-

grown, noble-minded women, lived and died in hapless longing to fulfil their nature, and find a scope for their affections. The causes were numerous, but they were all traceable to one general cause, the violation of natural law. Destructive wars, huge standing armies, colonisation by males alone—these had served to destroy the proper numerical proportion between the sexes. Added to this was the artificial tone of society, whereby women had come to be regarded as weaklings unfit to bear the storms of life, or to help men to fight and win their way in the world; equal, however, to sharing the spoils after the victory had been won. Even parents preferred to see their daughters pine and wither in singlehood, to their wedding on other terms.

It was not to destroy, but to restore marriage that the country at length consented to extend the principle of limited liability to the relations between the sexes. The evil was at its height when the legislature passed an enactment recognising as valid other contracts than those on which it had hitherto insisted

in marriage. As is well-known, the relief was instantaneous, the morals of the country were saved, marriage was restored, the *family* was preserved. Many, remembering the ancient feuds, declared that this only was wanting to complete the triumph of Protestantism. Our institutions were now free from the reproach of immorality attaching to all vows involving irrevocability. While many took this view of the indissoluble contract, unions without any contract were held in universal reprobation. People were free to make their own terms of partnership, but a contract cognisable by the state was regarded as indispensable for all persons possessing self-respect, and to marry without a formal contract was, as is still the case, regarded as highly improper. But it is for breaches of contract, whether formal or implied, that society reserves its strongest condemnation.

The ingenuity of the lawyers proved equal to the requirements of the new régime. Forms of contract suitable to all tastes and circumstances were duly invented. Practi-

ally, the marriages were (and are) of three kinds : those which were dissoluble only through the intervention of a court of law : those which required the mutual consent of the parties : and those which were voidable at the will of one of the parties. But in all of them room is generally found for legal assistance. They are called, respectively, marriages of the first, second, and third class.

Thus, the sequel showed how huge is the mistake made by man when he seeks to regulate existing society by ideas belonging to a remote past. The feelings of the living will not be ignored. Admitted to their due share in the council, they are an indispensable ally. The *Maids' Revolt*, as the woman's movement, which had its origin on the other side of the Atlantic, was called, was an important contribution towards the achievement of "the glorious Emancipation," which involved the utter fall of the old church system.

It was a comparatively small spark that fired so great a train. Had the ecclesiastical mind been of a more practical cast, it would have consented to concessions that might

have saved the edifice for a long time to come.

A movement was made (it was in the latter part of the nineteenth century) for relieving the church-going public from the recitation of a creed which contained clauses repugnant alike to their intellect, their moral sense, and their good taste. This creed, called, according to ecclesiastical wont, by the name of a person who was well-known to have had no hand in its production, not only contained statements which were altogether incomprehensible or self-contradictory, but by virtue of what, in the vocabulary of the female theologians of the period, were designated its *dratatory* clauses, it consigned to everlasting misery all who failed implicitly to accept those statements.

The ecclesiastical mind, incapable of appreciating that finer sense of truthfulness, which led the laity to hesitate about declaring their belief in statements avowedly beyond evidence and probability ; or of charity, which made them demur to passing upon their neighbours such sentence, and for such cause,

stuck to the obnoxious formulary with all the obstinacy of a papal infallibility. The so-called "Creed of St. Athanasius" thus operated as a seton to keep the sore open, until at length all the other creeds and dogmas of the church were brought into question. Of these, the dogma of marriage was the one that ultimately enlisted the women on the side of freedom; and for the first time in the history of the world the Woman was arrayed against the Priest. The cause of freedom was won once for all. Thenceforth, for all civilised peoples, experience took the place of tradition and authority in the guidance of life.

It was in pursuance of the same principle that the enfranchisement of women was restricted to matters purely social. In all that affected the mutual convenience of the sexes, they were allowed to bear their part. From politics, as resting upon strength of muscle, and therefore fitted only for men, they were excluded. It is true they did not readily acquiesce in the limitation. And the argu-

ment based upon Babies failing, the men fell back on the argument based upon Biceps. "When you can share," they said, "our place as policemen, soldiers, and sailors, by land, sea, and air, then we shall be happy to admit you to a share in the enactment of laws, of which, at present, the execution falls upon us. We grant that taxation involves a certain right, but it is, so far as you are concerned, the right, not of representation, but of protection."

But though we declined to confer public legislative and executive functions upon women, we were not unwilling to conciliate them by utilising their suggestive powers, and so created the chamber which bears the name of the House of Female Convocation, the members of which are elected by women, though they need not themselves be women. The powers of this body are investigatory, deliberative, and recommendatory, in regard to the Houses of Legislature. It thus serves as a place for initiating the discussion of questions especially affecting women and children. It is worthy of remark, that although in the first

enthusiasm for its institution, a very small proportion of those elected were men, the number of women has, ever since, steadily declined, until it now amounts to scarcely five per cent. of the whole body. Considering moreover, the greatness and importance of its constituency, the House of Female Convocation has not attained the eminence and influence which might fairly have been expected for it.

Two hypotheses have been framed to account for this comparative failure. One, that women do not choose the best persons to represent them. The other, that the circumstance of being chosen by and having to represent women, has a deleterious effect upon the persons chosen.

Mistress Susanna Avenil, who was for a term Vice-President of the chamber, is acknowledged to have been one of the most useful members it has ever possessed.

CHAPTER XII.



AND what had the Church to say to the new social development? Its once famous Reformation had delivered it from the tyranny of Rome. But how came it to consent to the Emancipation, which delivered it from the tyranny of its own dogmas and traditions? Deprived of its life-blood, how could the Church continue to exist?

For one reared as I was, in the ranks of the old orthodox *Remnant*, such questions as these involve far greater significance than is now-a-days generally recognised. I can see now that what I and my fellow-religionists took for the church's life-blood, was in reality its death-poison. I shall save space in my

narrative, and at the same time fulfil one essential part of its design, if I anticipate by some years the introduction of myself into the story, and relate here the incident which led, ultimately, to my return to *The Triangle*, and intimacy with Christmas Carol.

From all things external to our own sect, we of the Remnant rigidly kept aloof, regarding ourselves as a peculiar people, endowed with the high duty of keeping alive on earth the light of Divine tradition, as derived from remote antiquity, and interpreted by the teachers whom for the correctness of their views we selected to be its exponents.

We thus represented the secession from the Emancipation, for we consisted of that party which refused to acknowledge, as being a church at all, an institution which did not define the faith and practice of its members according to standards derived from antiquity, but left it to the congregations and their teachers to follow their own individual perceptions in faith and morals.

As was to be expected, so vast a move-

ment was not made without causing considerable inconvenience and distress. The number of the malcontent clergy was too great for more than a fraction of them to find employment within the Remnant. Of the rest, some entered upon a secular life, and others, to a considerable number, accepted a proposal made by the Emperor of Abyssinia, that they should settle in that country, which already was Christian, and attempt the conversion of his newly-acquired provinces in Soudan. It is owing to their labours that throughout nearly the whole of the Central African plateau, from the Nile to the Niger, the profession of Christianity has succeeded to that of Mahometanism. The achievements of Christmas Carol in those regions, thus have for me, as an old member of the Remnant, a peculiar interest.

Of course, I see now plainly enough, that a civil government cannot with any reasonableness or propriety claim to be qualified to decide between different points and modes of faith, or to select one form of belief in preference to another. All that such a

government can know is that it depends for its own existence and stability upon the general intelligence and moral sense of its citizens ; so that it cannot with any show of consistency, or regard for the common security, maintain a system which sets that intelligence and moral sense at nought.

But we of the Secession did not think so, for those whom we had appointed to be our teachers did not think so, and we were bound to follow them. And so it came, that while the vast mass of our countrymen were rejoicing in the freedom of the Emancipation, we stood aloof under the old banners and declined all advance towards compromise or reconciliation. We declined even to read books and newspapers which emanated from the other side, but were content with those which we could ourselves produce. And, though existing like a congested mass in the midst of an otherwise healthy system, we were entirely without thankfulness for the tolerance which left us unmolested.

Such tolerance, I remember, struck me in my early youth as inexplicable, except on the

ground that our opponents were possessed by a secret conviction that they were in the wrong. Had our side been in a large majority, we certainly should not have suffered any who differed from us to exist. Why, then, did the other side, who must often be irritated by our contemptuous assumption of superiority, and even of infallibility, not annihilate us? We assuredly could not put forward our good citizenship as a plea for their forbearance; for we made a point of subordinating our duties as citizens to our sectarian obligations, and this especially as regarded the education of our youth, and thus were a constant thorn in the sides of our countrymen. Could it be that they despised us for sentimentality and feebleness, or for the paucity of our numbers? I could not comprehend it; for all the lessons I had ever been taught were those of the most rigid intolerance in respect of that which we considered wrong, namely, difference in opinion from ourselves.

One evening I had gone to hear a performance of sacred music at the Alberthalla;

—that noble monument to the virtues of a famous prince of the Victorian era—which, with its galleries of the busts of British worthies, fulfils a double use as a national Valhalla, and a hall for musical and vocal exertions.

After getting to my seat, I found that I had mistaken the evening, and that the vast crowd which prevented my leaving on discovering my error, had met to witness an elocutionary exhibition, and in particular to hear a new orator, who was said to be gifted with the finest voice and manner ever known.

I may here mention for the benefit of my younger readers, that the institution of a class of professional orators,—reasonable and necessary as it appears to us, who are accustomed to it—was altogether unknown to our ancestors of a few generations back. In their days a man might be gifted intellectually with the loftiest and most convincing eloquence, and yet be physically incapable of uttering a word in public. Of course, when the whole of the faculties, mental and physical, requisite to make the complete orator,

happened to be combined in one person, the result was one of the highest achievements of humanity. But this was necessarily rare, and in numberless instances it happened that the noblest souls were dumb, the noblest sentiments unuttered, simply because nature had not chosen to endow the same individual with the requisite combination of powers. On the other hand, there were numbers of splendid physiques and capacities, so far as voice, manner, and dramatic faculty were concerned, but who yet lacked the genius, culture, or position, which were needful to supply them with aught to say, or the opportunity for saying it. For a long time the only resource for such as these was the Stage, for there the actor is not called upon to supply the matter.

At length it occurred to two men—I do not know whether they were brothers, or friends—to combine the faculties which they possessed in a remarkable degree; the one as a thinker and composer of orations, the other as an elocutionist; and join in the advocacy of some great public question which

they had at heart. Carefully and patiently did they work together at their respective parts, until the time came for public utterance; the composer, who had an impediment in his speech, elaborating his matter and re-adjusting his sentences, until the argument and its expression perfectly fitted each other, and the elocutionist practising his delivery of the speech thus perfected, under the supervision of the composer, just as is done in learning a part for the stage.

The partners made no secret of their method, and the result was so gratifying to the public that they soon found imitators. In this way the practice of oratory became, like the Stage, a regular and liberal profession, and one that persons of position and culture were not ashamed to follow. And we now possess a class of professional orators, always ready, for a fee, to stand up and deliver a speech on any question, or side of a question, required, it being well understood that they are responsible neither for the words nor the sentiments, but are mere machines of eloquence and grace. To them the vast audiences of

modern times are indebted for many an intellectual treat, of which, but for such addition to the author's function, they would be altogether deprived.

The convenience of the system at length procured its introduction into Parliament and the Church ; and so it has come to be no unusual thing for a minister of state to have his oratorical secretary, whom he deputed to deliver his speeches in the Legislature ; or a teacher, his deputy in the pulpit, or on the platform.

Sometimes a party of orators combine to give an exhibition of their skill, and few exhibitions prove more attractive than such a performance, or more valuable as an educational agency. Our co-operative artisan classes have always taken especial delight in them. They say it is the best way of learning history.

On the evening of my presence for the first time at one of these contests, the subject for the recitations was an ancient parliamentary debate, partly real and partly imaginary, in the upper chamber of the Legislature towards the triumphant close of the

great Emancipation controversy in the Victorian era.

It was with no slight uneasiness that I found myself compelled to witness a performance which was strictly prohibited by the rules of the *Remnant*; but as I was not a transgressor by intention, and could not get out except by being hoisted over the heads of a mass of people,—an operation from which my retiring disposition made me shrink,—I reluctantly acquiesced in my fate.

The first speech, however, served to reconcile me to my position. The precise subject for the evening was, The Church : should it be loosened from the State, to follow its own traditions, or should it be made that which it has since actually become—a national, rather than a denominational, institution—and retained as a department of the State ?

The leader of the discussion opened with a speech which completely satisfied me, so convincing on my side of the question did his arguments appear. He took the line that, the Church being altogether a Christian institution, and Christianity consisting of

dogmas, to deprive the Church of its dogmatic basis would be to un-Christianise it. The secular power of course was not competent to judge of dogmas; it must therefore leave the Church sole mistress of itself. If the connection between them was to be maintained, it was for the benefit of the State, for the Church needed it not. She preferred to be independent. Only, under either alternative she must retain her possessions. To deprive her of these would be a fraud.

After this clear statement of the case for the Church, I breathed more freely, and felt indifferent as to what might be said on the other side.

But I was perplexed by the heartiness of the cheers which greeted the orator; even at the points which told most against the popular view of the day—the view which I knew to be probably unshared by a single person present except myself. I tried, therefore, to think that it was the orator, not the arguments, for whom the applause was given. Of the beauty of *method* in statement, I was then altogether ignorant.

The progress of the debate made me very uncomfortable. The tone of it was admirable in its elevation, and wonderfully illustrative of the difficulties through which our ancestors had to steer their way. I began to feel more tolerant of my opponents, now that for the first time I was enabled to comprehend somewhat of their stand-point. I experienced, too, a certain twinge of bitterness at having been so long shut out from the advantages enjoyed by my fellow-citizens. For the first time the real history of my country began to unfold itself to me. It was very curious to see how completely the attention of the vast audience became engrossed by the merits, not of the rival orators, but of the controversy itself. The assembly seemed to have receded from the present, and to be composed in reality of tories and radicals, churchmen, nonconformists, positivists, and all the other strangely nomenclatured sects of those ages. And they shouted their assent and their dissent as eagerly as ancient records tell us used to be done in the Legislature itself; though of

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course without the vocal excesses, savouring of the farm-yard, which disfigured those ruder times.

I was already in a state of intense mental conflict when the new orator rose to produce what was expected to be the sensation of the evening. Should this story ever come under the eyes of any who are still in the bondage that afflicted my youth, they will comprehend and share the anguish I felt on first hearing it seriously asserted and plausibly argued that our dearly cherished religion is a mode of life, and not a set of opinions! and that whatever it be, whether practical or doctrinal, if it be not capable of development and adaptation by modification, it cannot be divine or suited to humanity; inasmuch as the divine life of the universe, of which man is a portion, is ever advancing towards loftier capacities and more complex conditions.

Well, at length it came to the turn of the man of the evening. Little availed the buzz of curiosity around me to remind me that the debate was but a recitation, and no real conflict of opinions. Like a half-drawn tooth, I

was too far gone to be recalled. The process could not be stayed there. Of the new orator himself I can say little. My inability to describe him, or his style, is perhaps the best testimony to his power. Under the first strong impressions analysis fails. The maidens of old, when visited by a god in their sleep, did not forget their rapture to note the details of the interview. At least, the rapture must have been very much qualified to admit of their taking such notes.

In a few short sentences he dismissed much of what had been said as worthier of a council of ecclesiastics, than of a national senate.

“Our function,” he said, turning to his fellow-orators who sat upon the platform, looking wonderfully like a real senate, “our function is not to discover abstract truth, or determine historical problems, but to do justice and prevent spoliation.”

Now when he said this, I thought, why he is going to speak on my side, for if ever there was a case of injustice and spoliation, it was when the legislature turned the Church out of

the Establishment, and appropriated its property to other uses.

“Whatever religion be the true one,” he continued, “it cannot be incompatible with honesty and justice. And it is not honesty, not justice, to take from a nation that which it has set apart for the whole, and give it over to a sect which comprises but a part. Thus, the first question we have to deal with is not one of disestablishment, not one even of reform, but one of ownership. *Who is it* that is entitled to have a voice in the management and direction of the Church, or of any reform to be made in it?”

And then he went on to answer this question in terms which I can but indicate, without any claim adequately to reproduce the original, or describe their effect.

“I, sir,” he said, “speaking neither as Churchman, nor as Nonconformist, but as a simple citizen, utterly repudiate the notion that this, our National Institution for promoting, not the suppression of Thought, but the highest welfare of our whole people,—(for such is my definition of a State-Church,)—is

in any sense whatever the rightful exclusive property of that limited company which at present sits within and enjoys the monopoly of it, holding fast the door in the faces of the rest of their fellow-citizens—even of us, who stand without and knock, seeking in vain for admission, or else turn away in disgust, and resign ourselves hopelessly to our exclusion. No—as a citizen I claim this noble appanage of the Established Church, this splendid and far-reaching organisation, this affluence of resource, this accumulation of prestige, as Ours ! ours to use and enjoy, ours to preserve and amend, ours to hand down as a fair inheritance to our posterity, in the highest degree of efficiency to which we can raise it. It is not that we have outgrown all need of such an institution. The fact that we have called into existence, or are actively maintaining, numerous private institutions of a similar character, proves that day to be still far distant. It is not that its shortcomings are due to its connection with the State. As well might the shortcomings of the Police, the Railways, or the Post Office, be ascribed to their connection with the State.

No, the shortcomings of which we complain in the Established Church are due solely and exclusively to the self-imposed limitations of that body to which the State has committed the management and control of the department. Namely, those limitations upon opinion and expression which have led to the exclusion of more than one-half of the people, and at least nine-tenths of the intelligence, of the country, from participating in its conduct and advantages.

“We hear,” he continued, after a brief pause, “those who affect to be friends of liberty, demanding what they are pleased to call the liberation of religion from State-control. Liberty! What a spell must lie in that word, when even its enemies venture to conjure with it! Fancy the man bound hand and foot, a willing slave, to religious dogma, pretending to wish to ‘liberate religion!’ You all know what it is we mean by *Papist*. But away with these old terms. They mean nothing now. There are Protestant papists as well as Catholic papists. The contest is now not between Romanism and Protestantism.

It is between Dogmatism and Science; between Credulity and Knowledge; between Assumption and Proof; between Dreaming and Waking; between Slavery and Freedom. For an organisation which rests upon a dogmatic basis, to demand exemption from State-control, is for a tyrant to demand liberty that he may be free to impose a heavier bondage.

“No, no, there is but one way of liberating religion, of nationalising the Church-establishment. Let the State, for that alone is competent for the task, abolish all limitation of Article, Test, and Creed, which serve but to close the human soul to the divine voice speaking through man’s developed mind and conscience. Let it abolish these barriers, which were reared in the dark ages of the past, and put Humanity in direct rapport with its Maker. In place of a caste and a sect of narrowly-educated perfunctionaries, let all good and capable men be free to speak to their fellows that which the universe has revealed to them concerning itself. Then, and then only, shall we be free to hearken to

the voice of that Spirit of Truthfulness of which long ago it was declared that, when it is come, it will guide us into all truth."

I was fast being vanquished, when he proceeded to describe the results of the opposite course, and showed the danger that would inevitably accrue to the State by erecting in its midst a vast power like the Establishment, bound by virtue of its traditions for evermore to crush the souls of men beneath a load of incomprehensible and unverifiable statements, and restrain the development of that very intellect and moral sense upon which the State itself subsisted. The proposed rival scheme of Disestablishment he denounced as being thus a suicide for the State, and a robbery for the nation, inasmuch as it would involve the transfer of an organisation and appliances invaluable for the nation's educational uses, to a sect comprising but a fragment of the nation, and vowed to repress the development of the national mind. "Let it not be for nothing," he said, "that we once dared to use Ireland as a *corpus vile* on which to experiment for our own benefit. The

statesman who robbed Ireland of its national Establishment, and endowed a sect with the proceeds, has other claims to the national gratitude. For this, he has none."

After a rapidly sketched comparison between England torn by religious factions, and oppressed by dogmas and traditions, and England united and free, he concluded by asking, in the words of one who in that age was regarded as being at once poet and prophet :—

"Is it never to be true that 'God fulfils Himself in many ways?' If so, if the Church is to declare that He shall fulfil Himself in but one way, and that the Church's way,—that is, if He is to be prevented from 'fulfilling Himself' at all, let us leave the Church as it is, or rather, let us raise higher its barriers, and strengthen its chains; let us stereotype our minds and consciences into dull inanimate uniformity, and sink resignedly to the monotonous level and torpid existence of marsh monsters; but no longer let us flatter ourselves that we are made in the image of Him who loves to 'fulfil Himself in

many ways.' Lacking such faith in the All-Living and All-Being, it is the Church, not the world, that is Atheist."

After the conclusion of the recitations, I sat absorbed in my reflections, heedless of the buzz and tramp of the departing crowd; heedless even of the darkness in which the hall was fast being wrapped, through the withdrawal of the lights. So real for me had been the whole scene and controversy, that it seemed as if the ages had rolled back, and I was an interested partaker in the conflicts of the past. But, far back, in one respect, as the ages seemed to have rolled, in another respect they had made a wondrous advance. The change in me was as great and profound as that which passes over a woman between the day before and the day after her marriage. I felt that I could never become again as I had been. The leprous scales of bigotry and sectarianism had dropped from me, and I was now a citizen and a free man. And more than this. I felt that it might yet be possible for the god of this world to be other

than the devil. I looked round for some one to greet as brother, I who had ever been walled-up in the pharisaism of orthodoxy!

At this moment a light step, coming from the room whither the orators had retired after the contest, approached, and stopped by me. Looking wistfully up, I beheld a face bent upon mine, a face such as I had never before seen except in ancient paintings. It was the face of a man about double my own age—I was about sixteen—and beautiful exceedingly, it seemed to me upon reflection, for at the moment I was conscious of nothing beyond the glance of the most mysterious, and penetrating, yet kindest eyes, which, as it were, took in my whole being, and made all self-revelation superfluous. Then a voice, low, measured, distinct, and unutterably sympathetic, said to me,—

“My young friend,—pardon my freedom in addressing you,—I sat near you this evening, and read all that passed in your soul. The times of which we have been hearing were the grandest in their issues that the world has seen. Had you and I lived then,

how eagerly would we have thrown ourselves into the conflict, and struck for God and Humanity! What were ever the battles of flesh and blood compared to that tremendous conflict of principles, which happily for us resulted in the Emancipation? You feel this, now, at last?"

Won by his look and tone, I said,—

"Ah, sir, what then becomes of the Revelation?"

"My friend," he replied solemnly, "so long as there exist God and a soul, there will be a revelation, but the soul must be a free one."

I made no answer, and he added,—

"I must not aggravate the impertinence of which I have already been guilty in addressing you, by withholding my name, though I am satisfied you do not consider it one. Here is my card, and if ever you desire to improve our acquaintance, or think I can serve you, seek me out. Good night."

On the card was *C. Carol, Triangle*. It was not until long afterwards that I saw him again.

CHAPTER XIII.



THE Nationalisation of the Church Establishment,—achieved as it was by the practical sense of the English people, and in spite of those who loudly clamoured for a policy of severance or destruction,—proved to be the gateway of the Emancipation. By it religion, education and society were at once set free to remodel themselves in accordance with the perceptions and needs of the age. The desire to separate the Church from the State, vanished entirely so soon as the department was thrown open and adapted to the wants of the people. Now, for the first time in the history of the world, was there a really free church, and it was to the scientific spirit that

the achievement was due—the spirit that said that if a thing were true and necessary to be received, men could always hold it in virtue of its demonstrability and usefulness, so that dogma was a mischievous superfluity. Under the accession of a new bond of citizenship, the vast majority of the dissenting sects brought their wealth of organisation and appliances, their learning and their zeal, and added them to the common national stock. The “religious difficulty,” as I have already explained, vanished, and thenceforward Church and School worked together in the common cause of universal education, and upon a common basis ; for there was no longer a conflict between faith and knowledge, religion and science, theology and morals—except, of course, in the little clique to which I belonged, arrogantly self-styled *The Remnant*. In the newly-constituted National Church, the State insisted that in order to be teachers, men must be educated up to a certain standard. Upon that basis they were free to rear their own fabric of thought.

Thus the Emancipation consisted in the substitution of experimental and intuitional morality for the old traditional system. This involved the release of women from their previous condition of social dependence. The adoption by them of several new modes of living was the instantaneous result of their enfranchisement. And from the first the experiment was found to work better than even its advocates had anticipated, multitudes of persons who had hitherto lived together unmarried, eagerly entering into contracts recognisable by the State, and thereby legitimatising their children. Indeed, the proportion that abused their newly-won liberty was almost inappreciable, and these few would doubtless have proved failures under any system. Moreover, being made far easier of attainment through the relaxation of its conditions, marriage ceased to be an object of morbid desire. Women had something else to occupy their thoughts, and were more frequently content to follow other careers. Girls were brought up to look upon it as a thing that might some day overtake them as an

accident, more or less happy, but in no wise as their sole destiny, to miss which would be to fail in life. Our ancient customs in regard to women were such that we can hardly refer to them without a blush : so fatal to their morals was apt to be the struggle to secure their virtue. The Emancipation changed all this. It re-instated Modesty in the high place so long monopolised by mere Chastity. And, woman having learnt to respect herself, man, no longer a prey hunted and scared, learned to respect her also.

It is worthy of note that in some cases the consciousness of freedom produced an astringent effect upon manners. For instance, previously to the removal of the prohibition against the inter-marriage of brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, such marriages were exceedingly frequent, but since that event, they have rarely or never occurred. Not that there is anything against them, but it is a notable commentary on the principle of artificial restraints, to find that the restraint itself operated against itself. It was the intimacy fostered under cover of the legal fiction of

relationship between persons so situated, that produced the desire for a closer connection. When there was no longer any law against a man's marrying his wife's sister, such sister could no longer enter her brother-in-law's house, except on the same terms of distance which regulated his intercourse with other women. There was thus no longer the attraction so apt to be engendered of custom and propinquity.

There is yet another variety in our mode of marrying to which reference must be made, as it is that which was adopted by Susanna Avenil. Her marriage was not only of the third class, but it was of that class and the separate system combined. Though married, she did not live with her husband. These marriages are far from rare, and their origin is somewhat curious. It had from time immemorial been an almost universal practice of girls, and even of grown women, of independent means and gentle nurture, to surround themselves with pet animals, upon which they were proud to be seen expending their tenderest sympathies.

Scarce a maiden lady in Britain but possessed one or more of these creatures, whom she maintained at great expense of feeling and money.

At length, some time after the Emancipation, some ingenious and benevolent person, seeing how many destitute children the country still contained in its streets and other asylums, proposed to place a heavy tax on all animals which were kept for luxury and not for use, but to convert it into a premium where the pet in question was an adopted destitute child.

The suggestion was favourably received by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, a supposed descendant of the once famous occupant of that office who excited boundless ridicule and wrath by a proposal to tax certain indispensable machines for procuring light and fire, called *Matches*. Many a sly innuendo was launched to the effect that the new tax now proposed might operate as a set-off to the previous one, by its tendency to multiply matches, a poor joke indeed, yet not at the time deemed too poor to find frequent

utterance. The suggestion, however, was adopted, and many a pet beast was discarded in favour of an adopted youth or damsel. Young women who lived and worked alone, were found especially willing to take upon themselves the charge of some destitute child. And such was the independence of spirit which they acquired under the Emancipation, that they boldly faced the charges brought against them by some of their more conservative fellow-citizens with the answer,—

“Well, and why not? If we choose to exercise our maternal sympathies without parting with our liberty, why should we not do so?”

Tradition being discarded, there were no grounds on which to found a remonstrance. Parents could not complain, for their daughters, no longer dependent upon them, had ceased to encumber the paternal roof. They were free also from the obligation of making marriage settlements, and providing costly trousseaux. It is even said that the young women themselves, finding themselves

prized for their more solid qualities, came to place less value upon their dress—dress, that supreme temptation of the sex, before which even our mother Eve is represented as having succumbed: for with her perfections she must have foreseen thus much of the consequences of her disastrous action.

It is true that there had as yet been no experience to justify the practice. But life has room for varieties, and experience said *Try*. And so the women of England, considering that all social expedients are necessarily the result of experiment, did try; and not being degraded by the consciousness that their unions were unrecognised by the law, succeeded beyond their most sanguine anticipations. For the men, finding them worthier of their love and confidence in their new-born independence and consequent elevation of character, offered themselves far more readily as partners in the higher classes of marriage than in any period of our history. Indeed, to have already proved her qualifications as a tender and judicious mother, came to be regarded by men of sense as a woman's

strongest recommendation for marriage ; and the question they asked was, not "Is she already a mother ?" but "What sort of a mother is she ?"

It is thus that modern society has escaped the evil which once constituted the greatest blot upon our social system. No longer called upon in the struggle for existence, to sell themselves either with or without marriage for the means of existence, women now give themselves only where they have already given their affections. Those affections being, by virtue of their very nature, not readily transferable, sexual vagabondage is reduced to a minimum, and its evils are altogether abrogated.

Inheriting the strongly marked independence of character belonging to her race, Susanna Avenil was one of those women who valued liberty above love, and placed her own individuality and work before her affections. She felt that as a woman she had a right to complete herself, and she regarded no human being as complete until he or she had become a parent. In her own case, it was a duty owed to the race, as well as to

herself; a duty from which, had she been weakly in body or brain, she would have considered herself exempt; or, rather, her duty would have lain the other way. The lowest types and worst specimens of humanity, she argued, are sure to breed; so that if the best abstain, the world will soon be given up to the worst, and the struggle for existence will end in the survival of the least fit.

Her brother used to twit her by declaring that if she had her way, all the links would soon be missing which connected man with his rudimentary basis. Already had the ape, the savage, and the negro nearly disappeared, each in turn thrust out of existence by the race just above it, and she would still further widen the gap by eliminating the inferior specimens of the higher types.

It was without a particle of vanity that she regarded her own noble development of constitution and form. She had inherited them, and it was no merit of hers to have them. But the inheritance brought a duty with it. Having inherited, she must transmit them. It was only by repaying to posterity the debt

owed to her ancestry, that she would deserve well of her kind.

The old-fashioned domestic life had no charm for her. She deemed it fatal to independence and individuality ; and scorned, as an oriental extravagance, the notion that it is a woman's chief end to minister to the comfort of a man. She scorned also the man who wanted such comfort. People had said that although so fine a creature, she was of a hard nature. But a time came when she appeared to them to soften. She had experienced a grief, a mortification, and for some time held her head less high than had been her wont. Had she been crossed in love? No ; the man with whom she had entered into matrimonial partnership had exhibited no symptom of indifference to her. He was a noble fellow, but she had failed to become a mother, and the failure was to her a bitter sorrow. She feared that, after all, she was not to be a complete woman, and at this thought her stately head drooped. The terms of her contract made a severance easy, even had the Legislature not regarded childlessness as

a valid plea. Their compact had been one into which but little of sentiment, as commonly understood, entered. Mingling with his feeling of profound respect for her nobility of character, was a regret on the score of the too business-like nature of her disposition. Her temperature could not rise to the level of such love as was likely to prove creative.

At least, such was his theory. As for himself, he soon married again, and then came a new mortification for Susanna. It did not consist in that which ordinarily constitutes a humiliation for women. She knew not how to be jealous. But in his new association her late husband became a father.

At length she gathered courage to try again. This time, to her joy and pride, she had the success for which she pined. It seemed then as if nature had reversed its usual order of sequence. Love for her children was followed by love for their father. Under this feeling she wished to renounce the principle upon which she had dwelt apart from him in a home of her own, with inde-

pendent establishment and liabilities, and follow the ordinary domestic usage. She was ready even to encounter the taunts and reprobation of the party of whose tenets she was one of the most distinguished exponents. Disapproving of the familiar intimacy of ordinary married folk, as ministering to indifference and contempt, the conception which this party had of wedlock was that of men and women dwelling apart from each other, like gods and goddesses on the peaks of Olympus, always on their good behaviour, and seeing each other only at their best. In accordance with this idea Susanna had been "content to dwell in decencies for ever," as an old poet hath it,—however unsatisfying to the heart,—isolated and dignified, and receiving the visits of her consort in cold and formal state. When she now signified her readiness to abandon the separate system, she found an unexpected obstacle in her husband himself. He had not belonged to her party, but being a truly conscientious man, he declared that he could not accept the responsibility of making her infidel to

the tenets of her life. They had got on admirably together so far, and it would be a thousand pities to risk all by seeing more of each other. He even said something about it being a "tempting of Providence." It is believed that he fully intended to come round in time, but thought that Susanna—to whom he was really attached—would be the happier afterwards for his seeming reluctance. It was with much amusement that her friends were watching the progress of her perversion, when unfortunately her husband died. Susanna was long inconsolable; but as her children grew up and flourished under her sole direction, she gradually became reconciled to her bereavement, and forgot how nearly her heart had betrayed her into turning renegade to her most cherished principles. It was thus that her own experience served to confirm her belief in the soundness of her views respecting the relations of the sexes; at least, for persons of her own temperament.

CHAPTER XIV.



AS Christmas Carol approached manhood, he manifested certain tendencies which oftentimes indicated to his friends a sympathy with the *Remnant* and its doctrines. Cultivating an ideal in accordance with his own strongly religious temperament, and regarding love as a deep devotion and life-worship, involving the gathering up of all the relations and clues of being, and casting them at the feet of the beloved object,—he hardly could bring himself to recognise as capable of love at all those to whom it was a diversion and an amusement, a pleasant pastime for occasional indulgence, and capable of transference from one object to another. Even the frequent

companionship of the Avenils, who found other engrossments more absorbing than those of the affections, and consequently respected the light and changeable of heart, rather than those for whom love was the supreme passion, failed to operate as a corrective to Criss's tendency to intolerance on this subject.

He did not, however, imitate the *Remnant*, and condemn people for having dispositions and principles different to his own. But he could not help wishing that nature had in this respect made everybody more like himself.

The Avenils held, and not without reason, that Criss's addiction to a contemplative life served to foster an ideal which bore little relation to the real. It was his wont, whenever the real, either in act or in word, jarred on him, to jump into his Ariel, saying,—

“I shall go and lose the taste of it in the society of my angels.”

And presently he would be soaring far above the clouds, in regions where—for ordinary eyes—all was blank and still; but which

for him contained sweet sights and exquisite sounds ; for his ideal became real, and heaven opened itself to him.

“ Is it not very lonely up there ? ” asked one of the Avenil girls of Criss, on his return from a long flight.

He was in a more communicative mood than usual. And the girls left their various occupations, and gathered round him while he held forth.

“ Lonely up there ! Oh no, it is never dull in heaven. There is quite as much variety in life there as here. I see what is in your minds. You fancy the people of the ideal world are all grown folk who do nothing but talk profoundly. That they cannot suffer from hunger, and therefore have no need to work. That they run no risk of sickness or death, and therefore need not to be careful. That there are no young angels who require to be tended and trained. That they all love God, and therefore do not love each other. Ah, no wonder you think it dull. Perhaps you think, too, that they are made of a mate-

rial too attenuated and transparent to be visible to the eye, and too rare of density to be perceptible to the touch? Perhaps you even think they are all alike in the uniformity or rather lack of sex?"

Criss did not know that Bertie had already reported many of his aerial experiences. The girls manifested great curiosity, and said—

"Are there such distinctions in those regions? Do tell us, dear Criss."

But they showed no levity; that, they knew, would at once close his heart and his lips.

They could not, moreover, help feeling a certain degree of awe on recognising the manifest likeness of character subsisting between him and those mystics of antiquity who founded the various religions of the world. Occasionally, in his absence, they would discuss the question how far his peculiarity was due to an extraordinary vividness in the faculty of personification, whereby the ideas perceived by his mind were at once transmuted into bodily form by his eyes; and how far they had a basis in fact.

Criss's own theory involved an identification of material and spiritual substances.

"Thought," he argued, "does not think. It is the product of something that does think ;—that is, of a really existing entity. This entity may be the basis of all things ; and it is a mere assumption to regard it as incapable of manifesting individuality and intelligence under forms other than our own, and without transmutation into the grosser plasms."

The general conclusion of the Avenils was that he was subject to a tendency to dream without entering the condition of sleep. The strong asseverations of impossible events with which history abounds, they held to be due, by no means necessarily to conscious falsehood, but rather to that unconscious and abnormal activity of the imagination which has its results in the waking-dream. Such dream may endure but for an instant, and come in the midst of a crowd of distractions, and be manifestly based on facts of which we were previously aware ; but it is not the less a dream. The confusion of the objective

with the subjective, caused by this characteristic, was, they believed, so liable to be mischievous in its effects, that they ardently hoped that Criss would, as he became older, grow out of it.

It was in reply to their eager questioning respecting the sex of his aerial friends, that he said, speaking in his most serious tone,—

“The love of God in the heart of the creature must expend itself on the creature, otherwise it would madden or destroy. Were there no sex, there would be nought but self-love. Therefore is Duality the universal law of life. There are, however, mysteries which the Angels themselves cannot fathom. Outwardly, their form of government is republican, having no visible head. Inwardly, it is monarchical and theocratic, for the idea of God rules in the breast of each. Every individual angel has a voice in the common affairs. It would be impossible to exclude the female angels from taking an equal share with the male, in political as well as in social matters, for all dress and look alike, save only to the eye of love.

“Down here, with us, should a woman approach the polls, the official, being a male, and constituting himself a judge of dress and fashion, as well as of nomenclature, would say, ‘By the character of your dress, or the termination of your name, I adjudge you to be a woman. You must therefore retire. The privilege of voting is not accorded to those who are thus attired or styled.’

“The universal development of sex with us, makes such outward distinctions indispensable. But, above, sex is a matter of private concern, unrevealed to the official eye, and manifest only to the loved one. Indeed, until love comes, I understand sex has no existence, being produced only under the influence of a natural affinity. When two young angels first conceive an affection for each other, they know not into which sex either of them will develop. But these things are mysteries, not yet fully revealed to me.”

“My difficulty,” remarked one of the elder girls, “in comprehending a perfect existence, is mostly of this kind. Of course there must be desires to be indulged, and gratifications to

be obtained ; for without them existence would be devoid of an object and aim. But if what one wants comes without effort, it possesses little value and brings little happiness. And if the requisite effort be great, it may surpass the powers of some to make it successfully, and so lead to disappointment and despair. I should like to know how the inhabitants of the ideal world contrive to balance between the two conditions."

" You are imagining a perfection," answered Criss, "that is impossible, save for two, the All-being, and the Non-existent. The happiness of the Angels consists in the perfection of their sympathies, which tell them what is within their power of attainment, and what is beyond it; and of their good sense, which leads them to be satisfied with the former. The leading rule of their lives is found in their own Inmost. The worship of the Inmost is the ritual of heaven. It alone is sacred to each, for to each it is the whisper of the All-being. God is to them neither Sphinx nor Fiend, but truly a Father of Lights. There, no church would be catholic, no convention-

alism moral, which sought to override this Divine voice in any individual soul."

"Why, that is the essence of the Emancipation," said another of the party; "to follow our individual temperaments, instead of laying down an identical rule for all."

"But it does not follow that one temperament is not capable of a far higher degree of happiness than another," said Criss.

"That may be," was the reply; "yet I suspect that frequency of repetition is, for many of us poor mortals, a very fair substitute for intensity of emotion."

"I ought to have said," answered Criss, "that the angels exempt love from the category of variables. That is always a serious matter with them."

"I don't care to be an angel, then," exclaimed the youngest, a charming volatile girl named Bessie. "And I pity them, for they evidently don't know the pleasure of flirting."

While his friends of the Emancipation credited him with approximating to *the Rem-*

nant, those of the latter with whom he held occasional intercourse, thought him terribly far gone in the other direction.

They held the strong old-fashioned doctrines respecting the heinous nature of "sin;" and Criss maintained that they had no right to judge of such matters except by analogy. "No human parent," he argued, ever considers his child to have erred past forgiveness. You have no right to think that the Universal Parent is harder. As for our own repentance for our faults, if He can allow them to find a place in his domain, it is possible that we may find things better worthy to absorb our attention."

He even became bitter and sarcastic in his reprobation of the slavishness and timidity of their orthodoxy.

"Love God!" he exclaimed to a group with whom he was discussing these matters. "Surely you would not have the presumption. Fear to do wrong! Of course it is better to do nothing than to do wrong. Much better had it been if the Creator had acted on your principles, and abstained from creating. Had

there been no Universe, there had been no sin."

Some of his hearers thought they detected a blasphemy in this utterance. It seemed to imply that the Creator himself preferred to do wrong rather than do nothing.

"Well," said Criss, with a smile that horribly perplexed them, "do you hold that there is no evil in the Universe? If there be any, whence came it? And if there be none, what becomes of your favourite theory of things? Ah, if you would only fear less to see things with your own eyes."

"We fear nothing, for our souls are safe in his hands who has saved them," they said.

"None can save the soul of another," replied Criss. "Even he in whom you trust, can only shew us how to save our souls ourselves. It is not to be done by thinking or appearing, but by being and doing. Each of us is a force, to be put into action and utilised. It would be a poor sort of locomotive that discharged all its power into the air, for fear that if it commenced to travel, it might run off the line."

His friends in the *Triangle* knew nothing of this side of his character. He was near his majority when Avenil, taking advantage of a visit from him, sought to sound him on the subject of his settlement in life.

"I sometimes fear," he said, "that we shall soon lose sight of you altogether. Your sympathies seem to be more with the old Orthodoxy of the *Remnant* than with us votaries of science. I shall not be surprised at seeing you finally captured by those daughters of Heth."

"Do I strike you in that light?" exclaimed Criss, surprised. "I had no idea of it. No, no, Mr., I mean Lord, Avenil dear. If I am not in perfect accord with you, I am far less in accord with them. For me the first essential is genuineness. If ever I marry, than which nothing at present seems less likely, it is not among the fettered and conventional that I shall seek a wife. Her nature must be nature, not art; real, not manufactured. I do not quarrel with your method, so far as it goes; only, it seems to me to stop short by so much. In that your science has for its

end and aim the development and satisfaction of the affections, it possesses my entire sympathy. They of the *Remnant* would crush those affections as being merely natural. You work with nature ; they work against it. But I always feel that there are departments in nature of which you take no account. Delicate and sensitive as are the instruments with which you gauge the finer material elements and their phenomena, they are still utterly inadequate to appreciate the existence and phenomena of the mind. There is thus a whole universe of facts lying entirely outside of your range, and to me the most interesting of all facts."

"Granted what you say," returned Avenil, "there will ever be this difficulty to be overcome :—the same mind cannot at once be in motion and at rest. Study implies activity, and in order to be studied the object must be at rest. A man therefore cannot investigate his own mind ; and it is impossible to see into that of another."

"For me," replied Criss, "there seems to be an intermediate condition, of which you

take no account ; and it is that which I love to cultivate. I find I can do so with more success in the finer airs aloft, than down in these denser strata. It is a condition in which the mind becomes clear and luminous as crystal : absolutely at rest, so far as effort is concerned, but still self-conscious. It is a condition, not of thought, but of *reverie* ; the condition in which alone since the world began, man has found it possible to hold converse with God. Your scientific activities can embrace but the limited ; and these, parts only of the organism of the Universe. Spiritual reverie reveals the highest results of the whole. The value of such reverie, I grant willingly, is in proportion to the amount of moral and scientific training the mind has received. Knowledge and feeling taken separately, are worth nothing. It is through their union alone that we can know God. It was because the intuitions of the ancients were unenlightened by science, or exact knowledge of nature, that they produced those hideous ideals of the deity which make the ancient religions so repulsive to us. Now,

my reveries," he added, smiling, "have the benefit of all the knowledge I owe to your goodness to me; but surely I should be making light of that knowledge were I to interpret it by anything short of the best of the faculties I find in me, I mean my intuitive perception."

"You will remember," said Avenil, "that I have uttered no word against the possibility either of intuitive perceptions or of revelation. I say only that, without the capability of being verified by repetition and experience, it is impossible to communicate them to others. They remain in the region of dreams."

"I see," replied Criss, "and will think over what you say. But I did not come here to take up all your time in talking, but to congratulate you on your new dignity. I cannot tell you how pleased I am, both for your own sake and the country's."

Criss alluded to Avenil's appointment to a seat in the Upper Chamber of the Legislature, which had just been conferred, unsought, upon him. It was a grateful proof of the

country's appreciation of his labours on behalf of science, especially in its sanitary and agricultural relations.

I may as well inform my younger or foreign readers, that it had been one of the achievements of the Emancipation to abolish the hereditary principle in respect of all offices, excepting only the Crown; and to substitute for it, in the Upper House, a system of election akin to one which had been suggested so long ago as the Victorian period. By this method any man who had won the confidence of the country at large might, without holding special relations with any particular district, and without putting himself forward as a candidate, find himself elevated to a peerage for life, together with a moderate allowance in money, and the historic prefix of *lord* to his own name, so as not to merge his identity in a new appellation. The number of these lords was, after some fluctuation, fixed at five hundred. The Prime Minister of the day had also the power of nominating a certain small per-centage of the peers.

The lower chamber—(I mention this that

all my readers at least may know the political constitution of this country)—consists of representatives and delegates from various localities. It rests between a constituency and its member, and depends mainly on the calibre of the latter, whether he should be a representative exercising his own judgment, or a delegate recording the opinions of a majority of his constituency.

The position of the country in respect of the crown, has for some time been very peculiar. Of all the nations of Europe, those only which retained their monarchical institutions were Russia and Great Britain. The rest, after changes and revolutions innumerable, have settled down, apparently for ever, with Constitutions modelled after the American type. Even we did not retain our old forms without a hard struggle. That we did retain them was owing partly to the failure of objectors to find a substitute free from objection; partly to the admirable manner in which the sovereigns of the Victorian dynasty fulfilled their royal functions; and partly also to the complete emancipation of the country

from dogmas political as well as religious. Experience having shown the monarchy to work well with us, it was not to be abolished at the dictation of republican dogmatists.

It was on the death of the famous queen, whose prolonged grief for the loss of her almost ideal husband has made her the heroine of many a tale and poem as a model of widowed constancy, that the splendour and cost of royalty in this country was reduced within reasonable limits. Her successor, a sensible, frank, and genial man, readily fell in with the new tariff, and he and his descendants enacted the part, rather of hereditary president than of sovereign, until a few generations ago, when the family unfortunately became extinct. Unfortunately, I say, not because we have consciously suffered any appreciable damage as a people in consequence, but because it is impossible to help regretting the fall of a noble old tree that has for ages made a feature in the landscape, and braved the storms which have raged round it and us ; because, also, we know not what may be in store for us in the future.

But when, through failure of heirs, the dynasty came to an end, something had to be done. What should it be? The country would not hear of sending abroad for a new royal family, and indeed there was no abroad to send to for one, unless we were prepared to accept a scion of Russia, Turkey, or Central Africa. This last was not without its advocates, on the ground that there would be a humorous retribution in placing on the throne of Britain a descendant of the famous Abyssinian monarch who had provoked our ancestors to destroy him.

All the plans in operation in the rest of the world were discussed and re-discussed, and a good deal of ill-feeling was making itself apparent, when a proposition was made to postpone the discussion of the question for six months, and in the meanwhile to consider the Prime Minister for the time being as invested with the presidential functions of the sovereign.

The interval allowed men's minds to become quiet, and at the end of the six months, no inconvenience having occurred, and no

acceptable suggestion having been made, the Prime Minister was confirmed in his new functions for another six months. It has thus come about that our country has for several generations been in the enjoyment of a government far more republican than any deliberately-formed constitution in the world ; for in all other republics there is a president who is virtually irremovable during a fixed term of office, whereas our president holds office only so long as he retains the confidence of the Legislative Chambers.

It is true that there was for some time a void in the mind of the nation which nothing seemed able to fill. The spectre of the vacant throne and crown, with piteous forlornness continually appealed to the popular imagination, so powerful do hereditary impressions sometimes become. And it was even feared that in some period of popular excitement a party might be found to make political capital out of the supposed grievance. So, on a happy thought, it was determined to place the throne in one of the Chambers, immediately behind the place occupied by

the Minister-president, with the crown lying on the seat, and the national flag suspended above it. This combination of the symbols of the monarchy and the nation, had the happiest effect in reconciling both royalists and republicans; and the new system of government has been found to work so well that we have allowed it to continue in operation ever since. Being avowedly only provisional, it involves no principle, and therefore no one considers it a point of honour to try to upset it on principle.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.



AWAY from the crowded earth, where men teem in such countless millions that solitude and contemplation are no longer possible upon its surface. Away from the sights and sounds of a complex civilisation, with its manifold cares and incessant activities, its constant changes and perpetual sameness. Away from engrossments that occupy the body and clog the soul, and dull the spirit's perceptions, and hide from man that eternal Ideal from which he sprang, and to which he must return. Away into the boundless plains of mid-air, whither none from below can follow, where they only can penetrate in whom the soul is dominant, even they who are from

above, denizens of the azure, children of the light, bright actualities of thoughts which the best only among mortals can imagine, which the most gifted cannot translate into words.

It is verse, not prose, that should tell of such flight into the empyrean;—tell how, when thus

Leaving far the world behind,
Like him of old, who on the wind
Was rapt from earth, and, as he flew,
Back his cumb'ring mantle threw ;
Ancient prejudices all
To their native level fall ;
For selfish thoughts and coward fears
Cannot break the bonds of years,
Cannot flee time's narrow reign,
And revel on the eternal plain.

Ah, no ; only he who sang as no other of earth's poets before him, or since, have sung, could paint the rapture of the flight as young Carol soared aloft upon the billows of the air, winging the blue deep ten thousand fathoms up, and higher yet, his whole being a song and a delight. Leaving, perchance, the earth wrapped in the pale, purple even-

ing ; regaining, as he sped, the golden light of the sunken sun ; bathing awhile in the silver shower of the moonbeams, and visited all night by troops of stars, as they emerged from their hiding-places after the departure of their fair queen.

Then the dreams that would come, as he lay floating aloft, poised like an eagle asleep upon its outspread pinions. Dreams ! Were they dreams ? And was it sleeping or waking that they came to him ? I reckon Criss knew not : knew not whether in the body or out of the body : whether in trance or in reality, when thus mounting as into the seventh heaven, he regained the society of angels, and was admitted into the recesses of the invisible world.

No wonder that even when, as one has sung of the bird of passage, all day long his wings had fanned at that far height, the cool, thin atmosphere, and the dark night drew near, he stooped not, weary, to the land ; for then it was that to him, the rapt and kingly youth, who loved to hold such commune, his highborn kinsfolk came,—came as fair em-

bodied visions and ideas, descending from the yet far rarer atmosphere of the regions where they dwelt, drawn by the force of the sympathies which they ever have with the worshipper of the Ideal. Little do people know what they lose when they clog their minds with preconceptions of the unverifiable, and with the positiveness of profound ignorance, close them against the teaching of the spirits.

So apt in discerning the spirits did Criss become, that he could recognise distinctions of gifts and characters, as well as of outward form. He made special friendships, too. There was one angel, tall of stature, and thoughtful and steadfast of mien, who conceived a great affection for him, and gave him many details respecting their mode of life. And more than once Criss was struck by finding how near is the parallel existing between things celestial and things terrestrial ; and this in respect even of moral characteristics. He was equally surprised to find that the inequality of their natures and develop-

ments is regarded by them with favour, inasmuch as it produces a pleasing variety, and contributes to the general effect of the spiritual landscape. Even a "bad" angel, as one of a corresponding class would be called on earth, is but as an accidental discord in a piece of music, and serves to enrich the general harmony.

One of their customs served to remind Criss of the exquisite art of horticulture. As our gardeners are in the habit of making even insignificant flowers effective in producing beauty, by massing a number of them together (no flower is "ugly"), so angels, who, individually, lack the qualifications necessary to secure distinction, gather together, like with like, into separate communities; and this, not through any law imposed upon them from without, but through the spontaneous operation of their own sympathies. He observed, also, that however large or prominent any of these sections may be, however convinced of their own surpassing perfections, or even however low in the scale of angelic excellence, they never make it a

matter of reproach to any that they do not belong to them.

“It takes many different kinds of angels to make up heaven,” Criss’s tall friend remarked to him. “Even the lowest and most rudimentary angels have uses which save them from being regarded with contempt by the more highly endowed. I perceive that you experience a sensation of surprise at there being such a class among us. But all things finite are comparative. We regard as such those who form, or used to form, the bulk of all communities of beings endowed with a capacity for intelligence: those in whom the perceptive faculties are not active in proportion to their reflective. Their powers of retention exceed their powers of acquisition, so that habit has for them a stronger attraction than progress. They love a mechanical sort of existence, and being devoid of the sanguine and hopeful in their temperaments, and incapable of imagining in the future an ideal of which the past shows them no counterpart, their faculty of memory altogether supersedes their faculty

of aspiration. With you, down yonder, this class would claim for itself the title of *orthodox*, on the strength of its conformity to a standard derived from an actual past, however defective it be in regard to present needs. But here we recognise as alone entitled to rank as orthodox, those who keep their feelings and perceptions open to the reception of any fresh influences that may stream in from any part of the universe. Some of our oldest angels have told me that we used once to regard tradition as the test of truth, and that there are places in heaven where the practice still widely prevails ; but they are far distant, in regions lying above the darker parts of the earth. With us who inhabit one of the most highly developed of the angelic spheres, to think freely, that is, what you used to call *heresy*, is alone counted as orthodox ; not to think at all, or to think subserviently to aught but the actual, is heresy.

“ The traditionalists, however, are valued among us for what they are, not for what they are not. Most of our historians, who

serve to keep alive the memory of antiquity, and so enable us to mark the steps of our progress, come from among them. We find that the greater the period of time over which our generalisations extend, and the greater the number of facts they comprise, the more likely we are to attain a true judgment respecting our relations with the infinite. We do not find, however, that the recorders of facts are generally the most competent to generalise from them.

“I see you are cogitating over my phrase ‘oldest angels.’ You think that if there be ages in heaven, there must be birth, and perhaps death. There are both of these. We call the latter *disappearance*. All I can tell you about it is this : we have our time. All finite beings have their time. It is the law of the Supreme. He said in his counsels, ‘I give them up all, reserving to myself one prerogative—Death. They are free to develop their natures to the full extent of their conditions : but all must submit to a period. There they must trust *me*.’

“And we do trust Him. When too old

to enjoy, or enable others to enjoy ; perchance when needed elsewhere, we disappear. This keeps us from encumbering our sphere, and gives the younger angels a chance.

“What becomes of us on disappearing? Those who remain behind never know. Some have a vague notion that the Supreme puts us into the crucible of his love, and remoulds us for a fresh stage of existence. But our ignorance brings us no fear, our love and trust being perfect. We have no certainty of a future. Like you, we are phenomena, whether recurrent or not, we know not. Do children, with you, when they fall asleep in their parent’s arms, wonder whether, or where, they will wake ?

“So you thought we had only to will in order to have. Indolent wishing procures nothing, even in the highest of the spiritual spheres. We are bound to prove the reality of our desires by our efforts to realise them.

“The sense in which I use the term spirit ? When signifying an entity, it differs from matter only in degree. In kind it is

the same, or, rather, they are different stages of the same material.

“ You wish to know whether we possess aught that is capable of surviving the grosser organism, and becoming re-constituted as an individual.

“ This is what I said we do not know. It is where we can only trust. Both in kindness and wisdom is it so ordained. In kindness, because hope is one of the most precious of possessions, and where all is certainty there is no room for hope. In wisdom, because the imaginative faculty which appertains to all intelligent beings, would, by the certainty of a future state, be called into such intense activity respecting its nature, as to make the present comparatively valueless. The Supreme lives in the Now, as well as in the Then. So that to contemn and neglect the present life, is to defraud Him and ourselves also.

“ Glance to the past history of your own world. Whence have sprung the vast majority of the evils your own race has experienced? Is it not through regarding as

absolutely certain that which ought to be an aspiration and a hope, that man has sacrificed the happiness provided for him in the present life, to his fears respecting the future ?

“ Well, with us in heaven, as well as with you on earth, the certainty that a future awaits us, would operate upon the present more perniciously than an equally strong conviction the other way. The conviction that we exist only in the present would, sooner or later, lead to our making the very best of that present. We should thus, at least, give the Supreme credit for meaning well by us so long as we existed. But we should not have hope, as under the present arrangement—the *may-be*.

“ Besides, were our actions weighted with motives derived from the certainty of an hereafter, real morality would be all but impossible. We must love and follow good for its own sake, otherwise we are not fitted to endure. Change of place works no radical change of mind. If we have no love of good here, there is no reason to suppose we should have it there. And if we have it not, how

can we desire to perpetuate existences which are devoid of such love ?

“Our abode ? That is principally on the confines of the atmosphere which encircles the earth. It sustains us as the solid surface of the earth sustains you, and as the sea sustains your ships. Resting on that, we can raise our heads aloft, and inhale the pure ether of space. Our capacity for physical enjoyment is intense. On the ever shifting billows of the outer atmosphere, we shoot upwards or plunge downwards. In it or on it we swim, and glide, and fly, and dive. It is by a process of diving that I am able to penetrate hither to you. Would that I could take you into the far recesses of our world. But your time will come. Thank God, your time will come. At least, it is permitted to hope so.

“Oh no, we never have accidents to hurt us, at least, seriously. We are so carefully trained from infancy to obey the laws of our being, that even when we go on excursions into wild and distant regions, we know, as by a second nature, what to do or to avoid.

"We have no other law than that with which we are born, the law of sympathy. The springs of all government are within us. They may require developing, but never counteracting.

"Do we never actually do wrong? Well, I can hardly explain. The fact is, we delight in story-books, and we put all our wickedness into them. It is a great safeguard to us, and prevents them from being dull."

The latter remarks were made during Criss's last ascent to the Angelic spheres before quitting his minority. The rest of the conversation had been held at different times.

After thus referring to the power of their sympathetic faculties, the angel paused, and a roseate hue overspread his whole form, and he seemed to Criss as if about to withdraw from him, but in obedience to what emotion, Criss could not divine. Soon he resumed,—

"I ought to have considered that my utterances respecting our nature would excite

in you an earnest wish to know more. My perceptions now show me on what your thoughts are dwelling. Your thoughts are pure, or I should not be here. It is not forbidden to me to gratify the desire of the pure.

“Learn, then, that next to the Supreme, and our own Inmost, whereby we come into communion with Him, the most sacred of all things to us is the mystery of Sex. Its origin is a mystery hidden in the breast of the All-wise. Its method is likewise a mystery. Enough has been revealed to us to show that finite existences are possible only through Duality. It is the eternal and necessary antidote to selfishness. For sex means sympathy, sympathy with likeness in unlikeness. Itself the product of eternal love, it is in its turn the creator and sustainer of love. You, in your manifold contradictions upon earth, once adored the attributes of sex. Then for ages you condemned them, affecting a spirituality which regarded it as an unhappy accident. Then you blasphemed them by suffering a state of society in which the natural sympathies were

forced to succumb to conventional exigencies. At last you have attained a condition with which we can sympathise, for you have restored the affections to their due pre-eminence as the sole basis of morals.

“Some day you will learn to love. With most men love is the product of sex. I believe you more nearly resemble us, with whom sex is the product of love. It may be a hard saying for you to comprehend, but we know not, until love has developed it within us, to what sex we shall belong when we love. Unconsciously to ourselves, our inner nature determines this according to some law which eludes our power of analysis. For no finite being can comprehend its own nature.”

Criss noted here that there was something in the tone and aspect of the angel which called forth his own most ardent sympathy, as well as curiosity respecting his visitant's own precise character and condition. It had never before occurred to him to question the sex of his friend. Now, it struck him, there was something that strove for expression; and Criss felt his heart going out towards

him in the fulness of intense sympathy. But he did not speak what he felt. The angel was accustomed to read his thoughts, so that utterance was superfluous.

During most of their previous interviews, his friend had been accompanied by another, a slim stripling of middle height—a boy-angel, as it seemed to Criss—whose slight and active form was matched with a playfulness of disposition which was wont to exhibit itself in smart repartees and practical jokes upon Criss and his Ariel; and yet whose eyes and voice indicated a capacity for a feeling deeper than seemed compatible with his boyishness in other respects.

It delighted Criss to witness the strong mutual affection subsisting between the two friends, and to watch the gradual and evident development of the younger from mischievous sprite to laughing fairy; and he wondered whether he ever would attain a character grave and sweet and earnest as that of his tall companion. Now and again would the look of tender devotion which shone through the lad's steel-blue eyes, and

diffused itself over his merry countenance, suddenly give place to an outbreak of the wildest spirits, when his look would become wholly defiant, and his voice break into snatches of joyous song, and his whole bearing become that of a spoilt and wayward child.

Sometimes he would perch himself on the top of Criss's car, and, pretending to be jealous of him, declare that he would push him back to the earth. At others he would get beneath it, and seek to give it an impulse upwards, declaring that Criss must come and stay altogether with them in heaven. Of course, he could only make as though he would move the car, for it is quite out of the power of beings so delicately organised and ethereally constituted, to exercise a direct and perceptible influence upon the gross elements of earth. At times he appeared to be really jealous of Criss, once even leaving them, and returning home alone, pouting like a sulky girl.

Criss had noticed that of late his tall friend had become graver, and somewhat distrait, as

if pre-occupied and anxious. And on this occasion there was, as I have stated, something in his demeanour that strangely excited Criss's sympathy. The angel detected his feeling, and understood it better than Criss himself.

"Your sympathy," he at length said, "has won from me something that I have been longing to utter, but shrunk from confessing, even to my own kind. With you, attractions are of opposites. Yours are marriages of completion. With us, like attracts like. Ours are marriages of intensification. I doubt whether that which I shall next tell you, will be equally comprehensible to you. I am in the stage in which love is developing my sex. I love and am loved, but neither of us have yet attained assurance which of us will be endowed with masculine, which with feminine, functions. It seems to me that in some way this conversation has hastened the crisis. I have grown bolder since I gave you my confidence; and now I am almost certain that—that——"

And here his form and eyes dilated, and

he gazed intently into space. Then Criss thought he heard a rustling, but he saw nothing. Presently his angel-friend opened wide his arms, and with a bound there entered into them another angel of smaller dimensions, fuller and more delicate outlines, with long flowing hair that seemed to him like the mingling of sunbeam and gold-dust. The face was hidden in the breast of the other, as each clasped each, and only a tiny luminous foot appeared beneath the alabastrous skirt; but that foot convinced Criss that his friend need no longer doubt which province of being he was to occupy in the new dispensation upon which he had entered.

And as Criss gazed at them still clasping each other in blissful trance, the air around became instinct with life, and strains of music reached his ears, and those of the new-comer also; for *She* raised her head from the breast where it had so long been hidden; a face, one glimpse of which told even Criss's duller—because still human—faculties that every thrill and pulse of her being apper-

tained to the feminine. She raised her face and uttered a little cry,—half of timidity, half of amusement :—

“We are caught! we are caught! Oh, where shall we hide from them?”

For even among angels the first impulse of love for the one, is to conceal itself from the many.

But the joy of the angels over a new-found affinity extends far and wide, and is too vivid to be repressed; and so they had sought out these, diving after them to the lower airs where they held converse with Criss.

And then, surrounded by congratulating friends, and strains of wedding-music, the celestial marriage party,—the bride still clasped in her bridegroom’s arms,—soared aloft to their own abiding-place, and disappeared from Criss’s sight.

But the unutterable fairness of the face of which he had caught a glimpse, remained indelibly impressed upon his memory. It was the face of the boy-angel, as Criss had once deemed him; now by the force of love

developed into the woman, and lit up with all the devotion and beauty which constitutes the special appanage of her sex, no matter in what sphere of existence.

CHAPTER II.

RISS determined to spend the last days of his minority with his foster-father. It happened that Bertie was much occupied in carrying out a scheme of immigration for the government of Patagonia; and, induced by tempting offers, large numbers of settlers were leaving Central Africa for the bracing climate and fertile slopes of the Southern Cordilleras.

The illwill beginning to be manifested towards the whites on the African plateau, especially in the districts immediately around the capital, and the Bornouse and Sakatos districts of Central Soudan, contributed also to the movement. Many of the richer class of emigrants adopted the easy and rapid

journey aloft, and thereby escaped the discomforts and risk of the unwholesome low coast country; but the majority, together with all heavy goods, were carried by sea, embarking near the mouth of the river Niger.

There was in reality no hardship about the sea journey, except to people accustomed to the exquisite ease of air-travel. Our ancestors even of a few generations back, would have been filled with envy could they have foreseen the enormous improvements in the construction of ships, which a cheap motive power has enabled us to make. It is difficult for us to realise the fact that people used to traverse the ocean by the aid of the wind alone, or at best impelled by steam, produced by the combustion of coal; the stock of this article requisite for a long voyage occupying two-thirds of a vessel's whole carrying-capacity; and the vessel itself riding upon a single keel, at the mercy of every change in the level of the water, and the decks lying so low that the waves frequently washed over them! What would they have said

could they have beheld the huge ferries, rather than ships, in which, raised high upon sharp, parallel keels, and propelled by rows of wheels and screws, we swiftly pass and re-pass the ocean in crowds, scarce knowing by any movement whether it is storm or calm !

The sea now has few terrors for voyagers. The danger of fire, indeed, cannot be altogether abolished, though it is reduced to a minimum. Neither are collisions, either with each other or with icebergs, altogether unknown ; and when these do happen, the tremendous pace at which our vessels move is apt to produce catastrophes which are terrible indeed.

In the event to which the course of my narrative now brings me, both these dangers befel a vessel bound from the west coast of Africa to Patagonia, having on board a large party of emigrants. The clash occurred in the mid South Atlantic, and while the two floating cities were inextricably crushed and entangled together, and their machinery in a state of utter disorganisation, a fire broke out, and

threatened everything with utter destruction.

The first act of the authorities on board in such an emergency is always to dispatch a boat to pick up a wire of the floating telegraph, and summon aid from the nearest port. This was accordingly done, and then as many of the passengers as possible were lowered into the life-boats, to await, at a safe distance from the burning wreck, the arrival of aid. To the dismay of all, it was found that the boats could not accommodate the entire party, so that several still remained upon the burning vessels.

Among these were an elderly man and his daughter, who had emigrated from the Scotch Highlands to the mountain settlement on the slopes of Atlantika, in Soudan, and were now, after some years' residence there, starting on a new venture in a climate and country more nearly resembling their own.

The daughter, a girl of sixteen, had by her marvellous beauty and fascinating vivacity, won vast admiration from all on board. To the old, she was as a warm and glancing sun-

beam ; to the young, she was a realisation of their most ardent dreams of joy and love.

The father made a strange contrast with his daughter. He was a hard-featured, tall, saturnine, reserved, unbending man. They stood together now, on the edge of the blazing flotilla, watching the receding and overladen boats.

On the crowded benches of these was many a young man who, during the brief sojourn at sea, had learnt to regard the fair Scotch lassie with feelings akin to adoration, but in the excitement of the catastrophe had forgotten everything but self-preservation. It must be said on their behalf, that the forbidding aspect of the father had kept them all at too great a distance to allow of anything like an intimacy.

Presently a cry arose from them—

“Nannie ! we must save Nannie ! Jump, Nannie, and we will pick you up !”

Nannie’s face brightened for a moment, less at the idea of being saved, than in pride of conquest. Mechanically she looked up into her father’s face. The grim resolution

she read there arrested her impulse to fling herself into the water, as bidden by her admirers in the boats.

And now between those who were for saving Nannie, and those who were eager to get further from the burning wrecks, a clamour arose. The old Scotchman made no sign to guide her. The resolution with which she adhered to his side touched him not. The fact was, he loved her not. His was only the self-love of a cold, austere disposition. How such a fair, tender wild-flower had ever come to spring up on the bleak mountain side of a nature like his, was a mystery even to himself. He saw nothing of himself in her ; and in his heart he reproached her with being all her mother's—that mother who had pined away beneath his chilling influence, and, after producing three fair and lovely daughters, was buried in the Highland home, which soon afterwards he deserted for the slopes of Atlantika. One daughter had recently died ; another, the eldest, was married and settled in Africa ; and he was now taking this one, and all his possessions, to the new settlements in South America.

Untrained by discipline, and unregulated by reason, Nannie was entirely a creature of impulse. She knew neither fear for herself, nor love for her father ; but some blind instinct made her say to herself,

“ At least, if he cannot love me, he shall not be ashamed of me.”

So, in reply to those who bade her jump and be saved, she calmly took her father’s hand, and said,

“ Not alone ! I cannot be saved by myself !”

Then she whispered to him,

“ Father, shall we jump ? I am sure they will save us both.”

“ Do as you please,” was his reply. “ For myself, I have never in my life accepted a favour from any man, and I am too old to begin now.”

Nannie was terribly perplexed. She herself had always been ready to accept, and eager to serve, and she understood not her father’s disposition.

Her attention was drawn from her perplexity by another shout, differing altogether

in character from the last, for there was in it a tone of joyousness.

Above the crackling of the flames was heard the sound of a signal, exploding at a distance ; then another, nearer ; and another, so much louder as to indicate that they proceeded from a swift ship of the air, and no comparatively slow toiler of the sea.

All listened and looked intently. Presently a tiny aeromotive settled down upon the water between the boats and the blazing wreck. Its diminutiveness caused a thrill of disappointment in every breast. Adapted but for one or two persons, it was evidently incapable of aiding in the present dreadful emergency. But a clear voice arose from it, saying,

“Take courage ! A fleet of aeromotives will soon be here. I have outstripped it, to give you notice. But I can save one now, at once. Will anyone come with me ?”

It was Christmas Carol who spoke. He had joined Bertie on his last trip with the emigrants, and they were now on their way home together over the Atlantic. The glare

of the conflagration had reached them at a vast distance, when high up in the air, whither they had ascended in order to escape the contrary trade winds. Criss was travelling in his Ariel, and keeping company with the convoy, when he caught sight of the fire. He only paused to shout to Bertie that it must be a ship that was burning, and that he would hurry on, and announce the coming of the rest.

In answer to his question, "Will anyone come with me?" there rose once more the cry,—

"Nannie! Nannie! Save yon fair-haired lassie!"

In a moment he had risen from the water, and was grasping the rail at the edge of the burning deck, against which the remaining passengers were crowded together. There was no need to ask which was Nannie. The looks of all sufficiently indicated her, as, clad in little beside her long white night-dress and flowing golden hair, she stood mute and trembling by her father's side.

"Have a little patience," said Criss to the

poor people, "you will all be taken off soon. Come, little one," he added to Nannie, "I will take you safely anywhere you wish to go."

Scarce knowing what she did, she took his hand and stepped into the car, her father being apparently too bewildered to be capable of any decision.

"Where would you like to find her?" asked Criss of the old man.

"At her sister's," was the tardy response.

"Very good," said Criss; "at her sister's, wherever that may be, you shall find her safe. When the convoy comes, tell the leader that he is to bring you thither as soon as possible. Good-bye!" And amid a ringing shout he darted aloft, bearing Nannie with him.

She, on her side, seemed to partake of the general stupefaction. The shouting and the rapidity of the ascent recalled her to consciousness.

"Oh, my father! my father!" she cried, "do save my father!"

"Fear not for him, little one," said Criss.

"See! yonder come the great air-ships, in time to save them all. Their captain is a good kind man, and will soon bring your father to you—to us—for I shall not leave you until I see you safe with him."

His voice re-assured her, as no voice had ever before done, and allayed the beating of her wild and eager heart.

"But when and where will that be?" she asked.

"At your sister's? Did you not hear him say so?"

"You are going to take me all that way? and by ourselves too?"

"I do not know where, or how far 'all that way' may be; but I intend to take you every inch of it, no matter where. By the way, what is your sister's address?"

"The Elephant Farm, Yolo, Mount Atlantika, Central Africa."

"Very good, then. At the Elephant Farm, Yolo, Mount Atlantika, Central Africa, you will in a few hours have the pleasure of meeting your father."

And glancing at the stars, Criss turned a

handle and gave the Ariel an easterly direction.

"And now," he said, "as we are no longer going upwards, but horizontally, and shall meet the air more rapidly, you had better let me put some of these wrappers round you. The tropical dress you brought from the ship is hardly sufficient for this elevation."

And he opened a locker in the compartment of the car, where they were together.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the child, "I quite forgot I had so little on. I escaped from my berth in such haste, that I had no time to think of shoes or stockings. See!" she cried, half hysterically, thrusting out the tiniest white foot from beneath the scanty dress.

"Well," said Criss, "so long as we can keep you warm, we need not trouble ourselves about being smart up here. The angels are not particular about dress, and besides they know how to make allowances for poor mortals of earth, so that they will not be affronted."

He saw that the poor child was disposed

to whimper over the scantiness of her attire ; but the way he took it relieved her vastly.

“ I do think,” she said, “ that you must be an angel. You don’t laugh at me as any other man would have done. Had it been Frank, I should never have heard the last of it.”

“ Well,” said Criss, “ I do live a good deal in the sky, so perhaps I am on the road towards being one. Probably ‘ Frank ’ would tell you that you do not require such a course to convert you into one also. Is it not so ? ”

Nannie smiled and shook her head.

“ Frank is my brother-in-law, and I suspect he knows me too well to think anything of the sort,” she remarked.

“ I am glad,” resumed Criss, “ to find you are not timid at travelling in this way. Have you ever been aloft before ? ”

“ Oh no ! I should have been frightened out of my senses had I known I was going to do it ; but it all happened in such a hurry that I forgot to be frightened. And—and—somehow, you make one forget one’s fears.

Why, I am not even frightened at finding myself all alone up here with a perfect stranger, and with only these few things on. I can't think why it is."

Her artless ways and wondrous beauty delighted Criss. He saw that she was yet more child than woman, though, perhaps, carrying on her childhood somewhat further than usual into the domain of womanhood. He divined in some degree the grounds of her confidence, and he argued from it that she had a true and genuine nature.

"No one ever thinks of being frightened in heaven," he said; "and while here you must be an angel in courage, as well as in everything else, including a short allowance of clothing."

"Not even of the other—the—the—gentlemen angels?" she asked, with an arch look which broke into a smile, and spread like a glory of sunshine over her whole face, till Criss fairly gasped at the memory it re-called. For she exactly resembled the bride-angel of whose face he had caught a glimpse at the supreme moment of her rapture.

"Why you are the exact image of an angel," exclaimed Criss. "No wonder you take so naturally to heaven."

"And are you one, too?" asked Nannie.

"Now that is a point I shall leave you to determine by experience," said Criss. "But I shall insist on your eating something now, and then lying down and going to sleep. The angels do not neglect those duties, I assure you. So, after you have eaten some of these dried fruits and biscuits, and drank a glass of this liqueur, I shall expect you to lie down on this couch, and sleep very soundly as long as you can."

"And what becomes of you?" she asked.

"Oh, I have another compartment on the other side of this panel, which I occupy sometimes. But for to-night I am going to stay up overhead in the rigging, where I have a little nest, and shall not be near enough to disturb you."

And he proceeded to feed her with tender assiduity, yet not so as to excite any sense of strangeness or difference, and thereby throw her back upon herself.

Then he spread some furs for her on the little couch, and bidding her be sure to call him if she wanted anything, he took one of her hands in one of his, and pressed his other hand on her head, and seemed for a few moments to be murmuring something, as if in blessing or in prayer; while his eyes covered her with a grave and kindly glance, which allayed whatever still remained of tremor at the novelty of her position.

"Do you think you will sleep well?" he enquired.

"Oh, yes, soundly. But—but—" and her look and voice wandered, as if uncertain what it was that she wished to say.

"I can guess what you were thinking of," said Criss, softly. "You were wishing for the accustomed kiss before going to bed."

"Everybody who used to kiss me died long ago," said Nannie. "But I was feeling as if I should like to be said *good night* to properly, for once. Though I am sure I don't know how you knew it."

Criss saw that a spell was working on her

to compel a deep sleep, and that to balk her longing would break it. He wished her to sleep during the swift passage through the keen upper airs, by which he intended to make for the land.

“Give me both your hands, and look straight into my eyes,” he said. “And now tell me, Nannie (you see, I couldn’t help knowing your name, when all those people called it out so loudly—it is the only name of yours I know), tell me, do you trust me entirely?”

“I suppose I must, as I can’t help myself,” she said, with a look half saucy and half sleepy.

“Then, for being a good girl, and not letting yourself be frightened, I give you this kiss, by way of saying good night ‘properly,’ and after it you must sleep soundly as long as you can.”

As he spoke, her head inclined towards him, and he pressed a kiss upon her brow. Then springing up into the rigging, he left her to herself. After a short consultation with his chart and his compass, and ascertain-

ing his position, he turned his lamp downwards, and glanced at his passenger, and was delighted to see that she was in a profound sleep.

CHAPTER III.



NOWING the resources within reach of the shipwrecked folks, Criss did not further trouble himself about them. It only required tolerably fine weather to save them from discomfort during the few days it would take for aid to reach them from the nearest port, and such weather they were likely to have at that season in those seas.

The scene of the catastrophe lay about mid-way between the two continents; so that the distance he must traverse in order to place Nannie in her sister's arms, was about thirty degrees of east longitude, and forty-five of north latitude. At his ordinary speed, this would take him the best part of twenty-

four hours ; but a pause might be necessary, both for the purpose of ascertaining the precise situation of the place of his destination, and to avoid arriving in the night. Besides, Criss had never before carried a passenger of feminine gender, and he had a vague notion that all such were a kittle sort of cattle, and likely to require things with which he was altogether unprovided, and which were obtainable only on land, and in civilised places.

So, observing that he was in the precise latitude of the Orange River, and that this was also the nearest point of the continent, he determined to make straight for the land, where he would be within reach of anything Nannie might require ; and then run northwards to Soudan, keeping between the fifteenth and twentieth parallels of longitude.

It was night again when he sighted the coast, and saw the broad silver streak of the great South African stream far below him.

Nannie had slept the whole day ; but now, after a few uneasy movements, she woke, and murmured some words, the meaning of which he could not catch. Then, remembering

what had happened, she called to him, a little querulously, he thought,

“Mr. Angel ! are you there ?”

“All right,” returned Criss, descending to her. “What a nice long sleep you have had.”

“Long ! Why, it isn’t day yet. And oh, I am so hungry !”

“You have a right to be,” said Criss ; “for you have slept all night and all day too, until it is night again.”

“And have we been travelling all the time ? Have you not been asleep too ?”

“Well, you have lost nothing by sleeping so long,” he said ; “for we have been traversing the monotonous ocean. But now, if you are quite awake, and are not afraid to look out, you will see one of the prettiest sights in the world ; for you will see the earth asleep, and the glimmer of lights on the land, and the sheen of stars in the rivers, and the outlines of hills, and railways, and plantations. For we have reached Africa, in its rich and populous districts of the South. See yonder bright cluster of lights ; that is

the capital—the great city of Orange. To-morrow we shall be going northwards, towards your home ; but you must let me know if you want anything likely to be got in shops, before we go far in that direction, as the white people don't extend all the way."

"Oh, yes, thank you. I shall like so much to go shopping," cried Nannie ; "but—but I have no money !"

"That, I assure you, is of no consequence," said Criss, laughing. "The Ariel's passengers never feel the want of that. Why, Nannie, what is wrong now ?" for she was beginning to cry.

"I can't go shopping like this," she said piteously, looking at the rough wrapper with which she was covered. "One always puts on one's best things to go shopping in."

"Well," said Criss, "that is a difficulty, certainly, as even with that elegant poncho on you, the people would be sure to remark something unusual. It would hardly do for me to leave the Ariel in your charge, while I went shopping for you. But if you really dislike to go to your sister as you are, I will

tell you what we can do. I will descend nearly to the earth, over some town, and let down a line with a message and some money, and they will send up whatever we order, without knowing anything at all about us."

"Oh, do; that will be charming," cried Nannie. "And even if the things don't fit, I shall not look quite so foolish when I get home. I can't bear to be laughed at."

So they journeyed slowly northwards, so as not to be beyond a white town when morning came, Nannie undertaking in the meantime to make out a list of the things she wanted.

At first on looking down through the aperture provided for that purpose, Nanny declared that she could see nothing, and that it made her quite giddy. Criss urged her to persevere, saying she would soon get used to it, and that she must practise now in order to be his guide when they neared her home. At the same time he let the Ariel approach nearer to the earth.

Nanny was delighted when she found she could look down without being giddy.

"I see everything quite well."

"It shows," said Criss, "what a sedate character yours must be, when you can so easily get rid of giddiness."

"They call me *wild-cat*, at home," she said, "and declare that I shall never be anything else than giddy. And it's quite true, I assure you it is. Oh, I am such a wicked creature. There's no mischief I wouldn't do, when I am in the mind for it."

"But you can be equally good and kind and nice, at other times, to balance it, I am sure."

"I can do anyone a kindness, if I like them. But I am not allowed to like any I should like to like. My father is very strict with me; much more so than he was with my sisters. He says I am different from them in disposition, though we are not so very unlike in other ways. If you heard my sister speak, I am sure you would think it was me."

"Is your sister fair, too?"

"Yes, and the loveliest little creature in the world. You will be sure to think me

ugly when you have seen her. But she is not so little, after all, when you come to look at her. Only there is something so delicate and fairy-like about all her ways, that one doesn't see how big she really is."

"And I suppose she is as happy as a wife and mother, as you hope to be some day?"

"Oh, Frank dotes on her; more than she deserves, I think; for I don't see that she is so much better than I am. Are you married?"

"No; I consider myself but as a boy, yet. The week after next will be my birthday, when I shall come of age; and I shall be at home with my friends."

"So you will be going away from us almost directly after we arrive. I wish you were not going to see my sister. You won't think anything of me then."

Morning broke while they were still chattering, for being near Christmas time, it was high summer in those latitudes, and soon the flood of daylight enabled them to see every detail of the country beneath and around them, down to its houses and gardens, and

tiny irrigation-rills, and patches of dark woods ; and Nanny said she wished her father had settled in that beautiful country, among people of his own colour, instead of in the hot, central parts. And then she exclaimed,—

“ How surprised Mattie will be to see me ! She thought she had got rid of me for ever. I wonder what father will do : whether he will give up his plan of settling in America, and stay at Yolo.”

Criss suggested that it would probably depend on the amount of loss he might have had by the wreck.

“ Oh,” cried Nannie, “ I never thought of that. He had everything he owned in the world with him. And so had I, and—and ——” And here she broke into an agony of tears. Presently she resumed :

“ I have lost all my nice clothes ; and perhaps father won’t be able to buy me more ; and Mattie hates my taking hers. She says they are too smart for me. Oh, dear ! what shall I do ! I dread now going back to her. Of course, we shan’t be able

to get anything on the way fit to be seen in. And now I think of it, it will be such fun to arrive with only these things on. She must let me have some of hers then. She will be so mad. But I know what will reconcile her. She likes beautiful men. When she sees you, she will be reconciled."

And, full of this last notion, she decided that she would not purchase anything on the way.

This character, so new to Criss, needed a key, for which, just now, he had little leisure to seek. But while he was at a loss to harmonise her utterances, he was at no loss to derive huge satisfaction from the contemplation of her wonderfully mobile and expressive face, through which every variation of thought and mood showed itself in sunniest smiles,—a smile not restricted to the region of the mouth, but which was equally in her eyes and all over her face,—or a petulant pout. Her intense and thorough vitality produced perpetual motion in her mind, and a corresponding activity in her body.

"I never could have believed," she said to Criss, "that I could have kept still so long in such a little place as this, without jumping out. I believe it is only because the car itself keeps always moving so fast, that I am able to remain in it."

Certainly, the energy and vivacity of every limb and feature did irresistibly indicate that every inch of her was thoroughly alive, and so Criss told her.

"Yes," she said, complacently, "I am not a log. My grandmother in Scotland used always to call me a restless penn'orth."

Presently she said,—

"How fond you must be of travelling in the air. I am sure father never tried it, or he would not call it wicked."

"Is that why he hesitated when I offered to take you off the wreck? I thought it was merely bewilderment and alarm."

"It was partly all of them, I think," returned Nannie. "He says it is presumptuous in man to traverse the skies like a bird, as Providence never intended us to do so, or it would have given us wings."

“ Dear me !” said Criss. “ Do such notions prevail in Scotland, at this time of day ?”

“ Well, not generally, I believe ; but father always keeps to ‘ the good old paths,’ as he calls them, and says he is one of ‘ the Remnant,’—though what that is, I am sure I don’t know. And he hates to associate with people who follow modern ways. I never knew him make friends with anybody. He calls himself one of the true old Highland stock, and thinks no one good enough for him. Oh, he is so proud, is my father. I believe it was his pride, as much as his jealousy, that killed my mother.”

Criss did not care to draw the child out respecting her father’s faults of character, though he felt not a little curious to learn the circumstances which had combined to produce such a nature as hers. He was aware that the great burst of free thought with which, about the beginning of the twentieth century, Scotland had astonished the world, had left, as in England, a small section of its people comparatively untouched. So he only remarked,—

“With such views, it must have gone very much against the grain with your father to leave his home and travel by railway and electric ship.”

“Oh, no. Why? Everybody has done that for ever so long. It is only the air-travelling he thinks wrong.”

“Ah, I understood you to say that he holds it right to use only the bodily faculties with which we are born, and not seek to improve upon them.”

“Well,” she said, evidently perplexed, “I suppose it is not being used to things that often makes people think them presumptuous and wrong.”

“The earth looks as if it were dropping away below us! What makes it do that?”

Nannie’s exclamation was due to the sudden and rapid ascent of the Ariel. For the sun had risen high, and they were entering upon a region where it was necessary to ascend in quest of cooler airs. Criss had deflected from his direct course in order to obtain a view of that region so long a mystery

to the world, which extends from equatorial Africa due south through the centre of the continent, and contains, inextricably interlaced, the sources of the three great rivers, the Congo, the Zambesi, and the Nile, and of the series of marshes which cover almost the whole of Nigritia—a region now known as the headquarters of the greatest of black civilisations, and richest of all countries in vegetable and mineral productions.

Nannie had told Criss at what hour on the morrow she would prefer to arrive at her sister's—it was the hour at which she would be likely to find her alone—and there was plenty of time to make the detour. So they passed over the mountain ranges which stretched far away to the east and west; and Criss pointed out to her the diverging streams and told her of their ultimate destination, and of the long impenetrable mystery of the Nile, and of the famous traveller who, in ages long past, had devoted himself to its discovery, and to the abrogation of the dreadful trade in human beings which had made that fair region a very place of torment for millions

of people throughout hundreds of generations.

At length they reached a vast and busy tract, teeming with rivers and lakes, fields and factories, railways and electro-ships, and all the other signs which indicate the neighbourhood of a great capital; and then a large and gorgeous city burst upon their view.

“That,” said Criss, “is a city with the name of which you must be familiar. The people of the country call it after a countryman of yours—the traveller to whom I was referring just now—and whom they justly regard as their deliverer and benefactor, and who holds the first place in their sacred calendar. For that is the city of *St. Livingstone*.”

“Dear me!” cried Nannie, “I never knew he was a real man. My father says there never were such people as the Saints, but that their names and histories were invented to suit some fancy.”

“The same has been said of this one,” replied Criss; “and the very name has been adduced as a proof of the unreality of his

history. For mankind has always regarded *stones* with superstitious veneration, and from the earliest ages made them objects of worship. The Bible tells of Abraham and Jacob and the Israelites paying respect to stones. The ancient Greeks represented the earth as re-peopled from stones thrown by Pyrrha and Deucalion after the flood. The founder of the Christian religion was called a corner-stone, and the famous church of that denomination was said to be founded upon a stone, for such was the signification of Peter's name. There was also the Caaba, the sacred stone which symbolised the ancient worship of Arabia. Not to tire you with too many instances, the great German people ascribe their rise to the Baron von Stein, or Stone, who first drilled them and made them a nation of soldiers, and able to withstand the French. And now we find a *living stone* the patron saint, deity almost, of all this region of Africa. Yet there is good reason to believe he was a real man; as probably were some of the others I have named."

It was night when they passed the equator. Criss was now steering straight for the mountain on which Nannie's relations dwelt,—*Atlantika*—which reared its ten thousand feet at a distance of some two hundred miles south of the Bornouse capital on Lake Tchad, the metropolis and centre of the empire of Soudan, or Central Africa. A long stretch of mountain, marsh and desert separated the empire from the more southern communities they had just left; the principal characteristic of the region being its vast system of waters, which find their chief outlet through the process of evaporation. The continent here is divided mainly into two great valleys. Through one runs the Nile, which after forcing its way through the Libyan desert, and depositing a kingdom on the route, finds an exit into the Mediterranean. The other, consisting of immense and nearly level alluvial tracks, forms a series of vast swamps, through which runs one continuous stream, whose sources lie contiguous to those of the Nile, and whose termination is in Lake Tchad and the great marshy region

which there bounds the Sahara. Looking at this region with the eyes of his guardian, Avenil, Criss said to himself,

“What a country, if only it were properly drained !”

Nannie was awake with the dawn, and eagerly straining her eyes to catch sight of the mountain. At first she insisted that every hill she saw was Atlantika, so excited did the thought of her return make her. But Criss trusted to his own reckonings rather than to her reminiscences of what, from that point of view, she had never beheld, and therefore was unlikely to recognise.

Towards noon, Nannie's recognitions and Criss's calculations shewed symptoms of reconciliation. The Ariel flew low as it passed round the eastern side of the mountain towards the northern slope where the settlement lay. At length the Elephant Farm appeared plainly but a little way off ; with, to Nannie's great surprise and disappointment, the whole of her sister's family assembled on

the lawn, pointing upwards and gesticulating as if on the watch for her.

"Tell me," said Criss, "is the garden wired over, or can we descend into it?"

Nannie asked what he meant.

"At home," he said, "we have to place strong network fences of wire over any place we wish to keep private from aerialists. If your garden is fenced so, we cannot go down into it."

Nannie declared that she had never heard of such a thing in that country, and that she believed ballooning was not allowed or not practised there.

"But look!" she exclaimed; "they see us and expect us, and I wanted to surprise them."

A few moments more, and the car touched the ground in the midst of the excited party, and Nannie, stepping out of it, was embraced by one, who to Criss seemed another Nannie, only a little older and fuller in figure, so strong was the likeness between the two sisters. There was the same wealth of golden hair, the same broad fair brow, the

same quick and laughing grey-blue eyes, the same vivacity of glance, the same exquisitely formed mouth and chin, and clever little nose, the same determined little thumb, lithe figure, and daintily-turned limbs.

A fine, pleasant-looking man, the husband, whom Criss already knew as Frank, then came forward and welcomed and thanked Criss, saying he presumed he was the Carol named in the telegram he had received from mid-ocean, and placed in his hands another addressed to him, which proved to be from Bertie.

From this he learnt that Nannie's father had, with the rest of the passengers, preferred to continue the journey to South America, the Patagonian government having, on being communicated with from the scene of the wreck, undertaken to provide for them on their arrival, and despatched a swift vessel to convey them all thither. Bertie added that after landing his own party of the rescued on the American coast, he should steer homewards to keep his appointment for Christmas-eve with Criss and his fellow-trustees.

The message from the old Scotchman to his married daughter, was to the effect that he had lost nearly everything, except his life ; and that as he was too proud to come back to be a burden to his children, he should accept the offers of the Patagonian government, and do the best he could for himself in South America. If Nannie ever reached them—of which he had great doubts, notwithstanding the high character Mr. Great-head gave him of the young man Carol, for steadiness and skill—he hoped she would not be too great a trouble to them. But he would write at length on reaching his destination, which he hoped to do without further mishap, as a vessel had been dispatched to their aid, and he was not one rash enough to tempt Providence by travelling in a machine so contrary to nature as an air-ship.

CHAPTER IV.

HE European settlements in Soudan, of which that on Mount Atlantika was the chief, while rich and flourishing as communities, were, as regards their civilisation, somewhat in arrear of Europe itself. Many fashions, old and discarded elsewhere as the excesses of unpractical enthusiasts, were here still in full vigour. To Criss it was like going back to the times he had read of in history, to find women claiming, not merely equality, but identity, with men, in all the affairs of life, political as well as social.

Educated in the self-same schools, and on the self-same system, as the boys, and taught to have precisely the same contempt for all

pomps and vanities, they devoted themselves as equally a matter of course to grave and industrial pursuits, working in the farm, the factory, and the office, on the plough and the locomotive, in the Legislature and the police (for the white communities of Soudan enjoyed the privilege of conducting in their own fashion whatever affairs exclusively affected themselves), and would hold a rifle, and go through military drill, and had no manner of doubt that, if called on, they would exhibit on the battle-field a prowess little, if at all, inferior to that of the men.

In a state of society in which woman cared more to be sensible than ornamental, and men valued them for their uses rather than for their graces, for their robustness rather than their delicacy and tenderness, and mere esteem had taken the place of love, and the general aspect of life was grey and sober; the sensation had been one akin to consternation, which was created by these young Scotch girls, who, from the moment of their arrival, bade resolute defiance to all established rules of decorum.

At first the elders of the community felt strong in the conviction that they had educated the youth of both sexes far too well for them to suffer from so evil an example. But when they saw the effect produced by the wondrous beauty of face and form of the new arrivals, their witching ways of scorn or merriment : their reckless abandon of manner and speech : their utter contempt for the useful, and instinctive devotion to the charming, as the one thing needful or desirable in their sex ; and saw, too, that even the gravest and most practical of their sons were unable to resist the fascination,—they were moved to indignation and wrath, and ceased not to utter warnings against all association with “the witches of Atlantika.”

These on their part enjoyed the commotion they were only too conscious of having created. They knew that none could say any harm of them, save that they were pretty girls, and scorned to be anything else. Too heedless and untaught, save in the young ways of their own inbred nature, they scarce knew the source of their power, but felt that,

somehow, in them a tribute was being paid to Womanhood it failed to obtain elsewhere around them ; and it was nothing to them if it were paid at the expense of "civilisation." And the whole career of these girls certainly was a veritable triumph of womanhood,—womanhood in its simple freshness and genuineness, pure from the hands of Nature, wild and untamable in its utter unconsciousness of ill ; haughty and proud in its conscious superiority to all arts ; and winning and joyous in its wish to please, and its confidence of inability to fail to do so, even when making most strenuous efforts to be disagreeable.

The father was utterly powerless to comprehend or restrain the exuberant natures of his daughters. As children, there was no garden, wood, or meadow, where they would not wilfully trespass and stray. As maidens, there was no heart they would not win, and make merry with. As women,—ah, the thought of what they would be as women, sometimes made him hate the very beauty that served to remind him of the [mother his own hardness had done to death.]

At length some one was found bold enough to seriously wish to marry the elder of the sisters ; a man of good repute for sense and substance, the owner of an extensive elephant-nursery, and valuable ivory-works : honest, straightforward, good-looking, and highly regarded, even by the father himself. It was even more astonishing to the latter to find his daughter readily accepting the offer, at so low a rate had he estimated her good sense. But his surprise was as nothing compared to that of the whole community when Mattie insisted on being married out and out, at once, without any provision for a trial of compatibilities, and without any of the usual settlements of property on herself separately. When remonstrated with, and told that such confiding generosity was a culpable weakness, and a wanton throwing of temptation in a man's way, she said that she was a woman, and had a right to be weak if she liked ; that the other women of the place might turn themselves into men if they chose ; but that she believed any true woman knew a true man when she saw one, and that if she

could not trust a man altogether, she would not trust him at all ; and she did trust Frank Hazeltine.

Her lover would not be outdone in generosity, and accepted her with the same absence of all the usual safeguards and precautions. And so they became man and wife in the simple fashion of old times, when there were no marriage-settlements, no separation-clauses, no woman's rights. In short, they took each other for better or for worse, and agreed to swim or sink together. And the only member of her own sex in the wide country round that approved of their conduct, was the rebellious and defiant Nannie.

It was with a grim satisfaction that the old Scotchman saw his daughter taken off his hands. He liked Hazeltine, but he was too confident of Mattie's powers to plague, to consider him a subject for envy. He soon learnt to hope that she would plague him, for he conceived a profound distrust of Hazeltine so soon as he realised the fact that his wife loved him. The father felt himself supplanted in his daughter's affections ! His

jealousy blazed out afresh when he found that Nannie preferred her sister's home to her own. Altogether, he was so ill at ease that he determined to leave the country. It was not through any wish for Nannie's company that he took her with him. Indeed, he probably would have left her with the Hazel-tines, but the eagerness with which both they and Nannie welcomed the arrangement, decided the old man against it.

All that Criss saw during his brief sojourn at the Farm, was an exquisitely lovely woman retaining in maternity all the charms of girlhood ; and an exquisitely lovely girl, not yet matron, and apparently as fancy-free as any young spring-bok of the country ; and so given to inconsistent extremes of conduct, so incalculable in her moods, that she would hardly bestow upon him a kind look or civil speech, until he went to take leave of her, and then she burst into a flood of passionate tears.

Criss was moving away distressed and perplexed at a phenomena so strange and un-

expected. But Nannie darted at him, and declared vehemently that if he said a word to her sister or anyone else about her crying, she would kill him first and then herself; and that she believed she only cried because she had been so preternaturally good all the time she had been in the Ariel with him, and ever since, that she must make up for it somehow.

END OF VOL. I.

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